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CONTENTS

REGULARS

014 NEWS

Luongo drops a GP bombshell, our crack team of columnists get ready for Christmas and we give away some awesome prizes in our free to enter comps – check it all out right here...

028 DIRTZONE

The best bits from dirtZone and even more chances to win stuff!

030 STUFF

A whole heap of new bits and bobs you need in your life – more than your wife? Almost definitely maybe, baby...

065 MANO O MANO

Stefan Everts and Pit Beirer try and outdo each other once again...

074 BURNICLE'S BEAT

Burnicle waxes lyrical about another flying Dutchman – Gert Jan van Doorn

080 DOCTOR DIRT

Changing pads with our dirt bike doctor!

082 DBR TESTED

Our sexy Suzuki gets put to pasture...

084 PEAK PRACTICE

Make yourself a much better racer with Ed Bradley's mind and body masterclass

086 PROJECT RPM

Rob gets anal and lets rip about the ins and outs of rear ends

105 PRO PROBE

Jeffrey Herlings comes clean – kinda...

137 RAGE

The UK's #1 read for youth racers...

142 HOT WHEELS

Gautier Paulin's Kawasaki Racing Team race machine in all its green glory!

FEATURES

034 FACTORY KTM BIKE TEST

Bryan MacKenzie runs wild in Italy on KTM's MX1 and MX2 world championship winning factory race machines...

042 X-FIGHTERS

All the action from the world's most spectacular FMX championship – the Red Bull X-Fighters World Tour

054 AMA SX FAN GUIDE

Everything you need to know about the 2013 AMA Supercross championship...

066 MARC COMA

An ill-timed injury could potentially hinder Marc Coma's run at a fourth Dakar Rally title but will it?

090 BERCY SUPERCROSS

Bercy has long been thought of as Europe's premier supercross event so we sent intrepid traveller David Bulmer to check out the show...

098 RBPN CHAMPS' BIKE TEST

Edmund B Radley gets to grips with a pair of Red Bull Pro National winning race bikes – Evo-Tech Stevens' CRF250 and Buildbase Honda's CRF450 to see what it is that makes these bikes winners...

106 ARENACROSS UK PREVIEW

The New Year sees an all new indoor series kick off that will bring together the best racing, FMX and dancing girl action ever seen – get the lowdown right here...

112 STEVE RAMON

The Bomb's back on a bike and bouncing over to the UK to chase down yet another championship title or two...

118 EXTREME XL

Nuno Laranjeira reports back from the extreme enduro that makes Erzberg, The Tough One and the Romaniacs all look like a walk in the park...



ON THE COVER:

Wildcards don't get much wilder than Factory Honda's Justin Barcia © Frank Hoppen

CONTENTS:

Oakleaf Kawasaki's Alex Snow styles it up at the Canada Heights Red Bull Pro National © Suttty



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2013



COMMENT

Believe it or not when this awesome issue of t'magazine hits the shelves I'll have been an employee of this fine publishing company for 10 years! 10 years! That's a chuffing long time and in my case equates to 120 copies of DBR, eight long-term test bikes, seven knee ops, five issues of Trialsworld, a handful of Hawkstone programmes, three works vans, two drowned trials bikes, one FIM Journalist of the Year award (bahahaha!) and more concussions than somebody who's had as many concussions as I have is capable of remembering. One thing that I do vividly remember though – even if it is a very, very long time back – is my first ever day as a DBR staff member...

After moving up t'north just 12 hours before I rocked up to the office bright and early for my opening stint, nursing a stinking hangover after I'd cunningly attempted to sway favour with my brand-new female housemates the night before by plying them with a bottle of Jacob's Creek or two. My new boss had an alcohol induced headache of his own and wasn't really functioning all that well either so instead of learning the ropes I spent the whole day rooting through bulging drawers of trannies. Fortunately the next nine and a bit years were spent a bit more constructively and, well, here we are.

By my reckoning this 10 year stretch makes me DBR's second longest ever serving staff member – with only the Lawless reign of terror eclipsing my lengthy effort. There is one man who's got us both beat though – even if you combine our combined time together – and although he's never even visited DBR Towers has had his stuff slapped inside the magazine ever since our January/February 1982 issue (we were bi back then). Who am I on about? Jack Burnicle...

While a lot of people simply know Jack as the man behind the mic at off-road events like the Tough One or Dirt Bike Show, or maybe as the voice of BSB on TV nor many figure that that historian chap whose monthly mutterings appear in 'the Dirt Bike Rider' used to actually be a

full-on moto photojournalist who travelled from GP to GP. And it's in that role that he touched a generation, a generation who relied on TMX and DBR to fill them in on what was happening in a pre-internet and live TV coverage off-road world.

It wasn't just the news that Jack delivered that touched us but the way in which he delivered it. In my mind the guy's a genius and he instilled a love for the English language in me at a time when literary legends like Laurie Lee – that were pushed my way in GCSE English – epically failed. Of course, it definitely helped that Jack waxed lyrical about a sport I already loved and for creating that passion I have to look to another hero of mine – my dad!

Now, my dad's not a hero in the same way that Ryan Thorpe's old man is, nor like the guys doing it for queen and country in Afghanistan are, but I'm always going to look up to him and be grateful for everything he's done for me even though I know I've not always shown it.

I guess I have my dad to thank for my earliest memories too – being at races, cleaning his Maico with a blunt screwdriver, scratching his goggle lense with a crusty rag and just generally enjoying the sights, sounds and smells of a day at the races surrounded by my family.

And those sweet memories really help remind me how important family really are – in every day life and particularly when it comes to off-road sports. While we all like to claim that motocross, trials and enduro aren't team activities the truth is that without our original team behind us – that original team being our family – we most likely wouldn't have ever been able to start riding in the first place. I certainly know that I wouldn't and I can't think of a single champion who's got where they are without the support of their either.

So with Christmas coming up be extra nice to your team and remember that a subscription to DBR makes an excellent gift! Enjoy the mag and if you want to send me a festive death threat – or any other message – drop me an email at anthony.sutton@dirtbikerider.co.uk. Until next year...

Sutton



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Chunky monkey Eric Sorby is doing it for all the big boned dudes out there



The MX2 class riders are in for a roosting in 2013 even if they're at the front of their class

NEWSH^{PAW}UND!

A LEG-HUMPINGLY AWESOME DELIVERY OF DIRTY BIKE NEWS FROM AROUND THE WORLD...

So we're trundling along through the off-season and not much is happening until Giuseppe Luongo and the Youthstream crew drop an absolute bombshell. While rumours about certain changes to the way GPs may or may not run in the next few years have been doing the rounds for quite some time nobody thought that the changes would come into effect so quickly and make such a massive difference to the 2013 championship. What am I on about? Mixed-capacity motos at overseas GPs and overseas GPs where not everyone is welcome...

It seems that in order to combat half full starting gates at the more distant rounds, Youthstream and the FIM have decided that one full gate of 40 riders is better than two with 20-odd on and so in Qatar, Thailand, Mexico and Brazil we're gonna get mixed MX1 and MX2 motos featuring 15 250F pilots up against 15 fo-fiddys with the final 10 spots being made up by whoever else gets the nod plus a couple of yokels. In some way that's cool because I can't wait to see a Herlings versus

Cairoli battle but in a million others it sucks ass.

For starters rounds one and two will run under these rules and that means the 15 seeded riders from each class – plus eight other series regulars whoever they are – are gonna have a healthy head start on the rest when the world championship returns to Europe at Easter. And since both classes will be scored separately every rider who gets the invite is guaranteed to score points. To make matters even more confusing Youthstream have issued a list of teams that they're gonna help get to rounds one and two and although I'm sure there's some method to their madness it's certainly not the fastest 15 in each class who are getting the nod.

Let's look at the MX1 class for instance where only eight of last year's final top 15 will get an automatic invite to race, as well as financial assistance in getting there. Okay, there are some newcomers to MX1 including our own Tommy Searle as well as riders who were injured last term like Max Nagl and Steven Frossard but at the same time there's some seriously strong

talent that's been overlooked – 2012 moto winner Xavier Boog and perennial top-10 runners Tanel Leok and Rui Goncalves for example.

What's even more mystifying is why a team like LS Motors Honda – who are running fragile Frenchman Gregory Aranda and Belgium's Jens Getteman (he was a stunning 25th in the 2012 MX2 title chase apparently) – would get two guaranteed starting spots plus help with logistics when STR KTM's Matiss Karro and Jonathan Barragan will most likely end up being paid by Steve Turner to stay home that weekend because they can't get a place on the gate. When Luongo said some years back that it was his dream for professional motocross racers to make more money in a safer environment I'm not quite sure this is what he fantasised about.

While this new direction is bad for a few of the MX1 stars it's a pretty sh*tty deal for each and every MX2 racer involved as they now get to eat 450 roost three times a weekend! And even if they win their class they might not get to run up at the front of the pack and will potentially miss out on

a load of TV time n'all.

What's even more laughable is the fact that as well as the 15 chosen MX2 pilots, the top three from the EMX250 series get travel assistance for the opening two world championship rounds too – although not necessarily a guaranteed starting spot. That's way cool for Mel Pocock and Stefan Olsen but a kick in the teeth for bronze medalist Mike Kras who's actually too old to race MX2 on the world stage as it's considered by Youthstream and the FIM to be a development/feeder class into MX1 for riders under the age of 23.

Let's think about that for a moment because in my mind that's like saying 'here you go little ones, you go play with the bigger, stronger boys who you're not actually as good as just yet. Oh and to make it more challenging you can only ride a bike with less power. Yeah, we know that means you're gonna get midpack starts and get roasted to pieces but it'll be character building'. It's all sh*t's and giggles until people stop giggling – and it's sh*t.

Don't get me wrong, I'm no Youthstream hater but when the





MAC211

BMX BANDIT!

BILLY DREAMS BACK TO THE GOOD OLD DAYS WHEN LIFE WAS SIMPLE AND HE WIELDED A 20 INCHER – BICYCLE OBVIOUSLY...

Words by Billy MacKenzie Photo by Andrew Ferguson

It's been a hectic supercross series this year and another rollercoaster ride results wise. It's becoming apparent that my supercross skills may not be up to scratch! After a decent ride at round one I got the feeling I may have had enough for some podium results – I crashed on the first lap and raced back to seventh which wasn't too bad. My speed felt good and I was pacing the leaders as I spotted them on the other side of the track.

Phillip Island was a bit different. I had some decent lap times and some top three starts to get myself in the mix but it just wasn't to be. After holeshotting the second heat race I got stuffed in the first corner and hit neutral on the first small double. I jammed it in gear but again as I jumped on to a tabletop to bounce over a small jump it went in neutral again and I cartwheeled down the track! It was a heaving crash and I grazed all my right shoulder and it felt like I'd almost dislocated it. I felt a bit second hand after that and just made sure I got through the 20 lap main.

The last two rounds were just as average. The crash at Phillip Island and the small shoulder injury meant I wasn't feeling so confident after that. I made some big suspension changes at round three in attempt to have a good race but the rain came down and it was another trail ride. I was running sixth until I crashed with two laps to go trying to make a pass. The last round was a lonely affair and I just rode around and finished my time with Kawasaki while making sure I stayed out of the way of the championship contenders.

It's been decided I'm gonna miss SX next year and focus on racing the Nationals – and I'm only too happy to oblige. Supercross was cool when I first started but as I kept practicing and the tracks got a bit harder I started to not enjoy it. At some tracks I was good and at others I just sucked! I had a few podiums along the way and got a real taste for some pretty professional supercross races against good competition and I'm happy to have experienced it as a racer. If I have a decent motocross season I may think

about doing SX again but would be quite happy to come home for a few races instead.

So on to brighter things, I'm with a new team next year – a very successful one and it's feeling like the right time for a change of direction. It's been a mad and crazy three years with Kawasaki with some great results and I thank them hugely for helping me get set up in Australia. I wish I could tell you what the new team is but I'm sure you will work it out (the big rumour from Down Under is that it's CDR Yamaha – Suttty).

So next on my schedule is training and testing. There are lots of things going on and the weather is getting scorching hot! I've got all kinda things lined up – football, BMXing, mountain bike riding and swimming to name a few. I was out cruising on my BMX tonight and I'm starting to really map the area out as each day I ride I always find a new kerb jump or think about making a big berm in someone's garden!

We used to be real terrors on BMXs when I was younger. Bry reminded me of this when I read a Tweet from him today saying he wishes he had his BMX to scoot down to the shops on. We used to play out on our bikes every single day from when we got home from school until the sun went down. I remember hanging outside Spar doing tricks like proper like BMX bandits, eating four bags of McCoy's crisps and Space Raiders, doing massive skids when the frost came out and spending hours down our local tabletop jump, digging holes and building jumps all over town! Basically I'm gonna bring the fun back into training and start playing some competitive sports like I used to do when I was young – the weather is perfect for football until the sun goes down.

I hope everyone has an amazing Christmas. Think of me down on the beach with a BBQ and a football and I'll think of you guys and the winter frost. You may think mine sounds better but after three years over here I'm more than ready for a white Christmas again!



Grimbo wants to defend his T1 title

first eighth of the championship is only accessible to riders handpicked by the management then you gotta wonder what value the championship has in real terms. And with the classes scored separately will the races be the spectacle everyone is hoping they will be – will Herlings push hard to beat Cairoli and risk his 25 championship points if the second placed MX2 rider is half a minute back and mired in the MX1 midpack? Time will tell...

On the subject of spectacles the Bercy Supercross made for some great viewing on Motors TV this month and I was especially pumped to see old-timer Eric Sorby doing it for all us 'big boned' aka fat fellas. It's pretty obvious that Eric has been doing an awful lot of good livin' of late but the barrel-bellied Frenchman is still super fast despite his age and weight disadvantage. Now I know that not everyone can be a Slimmer of the Year but I'm sure if Sorby lost a few stones he'd still make an AMA main or two. Whether he wants to is another thing though and since he seems happy enough as he is – even with all that extra padding – he probably won't bother.

At the other end of the BMI scale super-skinny extreme enduro ace Jonny Walker won the Tough One's Little Brother at Nantmawr Quarry t'other week beating Graham Jarvis to the finish by just over two minutes in the two hour epic. Grimbo had lead the race early doors but a damaged front brake slowed him down which allowed the Cumbrian up n' comer to power past and escape with victory on the Red Bull KTM.

The actual Tough One takes place on January 12 and promises to be the best T1 ever with a whopping £2000 first prize ensuring a full line up of pro off-road racers will pick up the challenge of the UK's hardest hard enduro! Unlike recent editions that have run into the dark the 2013 race will be a purely daytime affair with the main event starting at 12 and running until three. When that's done and dusted the top six finishers will take place in the Boulder Dash where the winner can potentially pick up another £1000! All the action goes off at Nantmawr Quarry which is just down the road from Oswestry – t'post code is SY10 9HJ.

Another big event going off on January 12 is the opening round of the four stop Arenacross UK championship which you can read all about on page 106. This exciting new series starts in London's O2 Arena before heading to Belfast's Odyssey Arena one week later for round two. After a weekend off, the series swings by Birmingham's LG Arena on February 2 before finishing with a flourish in Liverpool's Echo Arena on February 10.

Another big event going off on February 10 is the Hawk International Motocross at Hawkstone Park. Considered to be one of the more important pre-season internationals of the 2013 race season – due to the series starting in sand of Qatar – the first major team to sign up is the CLS Monster Energy Pro Circuit Kawasaki squad that includes Tommy Searle, Arnaud Tonus and Alessandro Lupino. More big signings are expected to be announced soon so keep an eye on www.dirtbikerider.com where we'll keep you filled in!





WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

A DECADE EUROPE RACE PACKAGE WORTH WAY OVER £500...

The new race season's about to start and you're probably about ready to go out and splash some cash on new racewear, goggles and other essential bits and bobs – like a bike stand, a mat to put it on and a fresh fuel can to replace that one you threw at next door's cat and never got round to retrieving from its tea towel holder.

While cruelty towards cats is not something we condone here at DBR Towers getting fresh swag is and to celebrate Christmas – and the start of the New Year – we've hooked up with the darlings at Decade Europe to offer you the chance to win a race package worth way over £500!

This pukka prize is basically comprised of a set of JT Evo Lite racewear (jersey, gloves and pants), three pairs of 100% goggles (1 x Racecraft, 1 x Accuri and 1 x Strata) and a Matrix M2 Worx stand, M7 Trux mat and M3 Utility can and by our reckoning is pretty damn cool.

To be in with a chance of winning this decadent Decade Europe race package we need you to answer this really easy question.

Which rider was spotted (geddit?) wearing JT Racing's 2013 Limited Edition Dalmation racewear at the Monster Energy Cup?

Was it: **A:** Mike Alessi
B: Mike Metzger
C: Mike Rotch
D: Mike and the Mechanics

If you think you know the answer log on to our website – www.dirtbikerider.com – and follow the competitions link in dirtZone or use your smartphone to scan this funky **QR code** which'll take you right there. The competition closes on **February 7** when the first correct answer plucked out of our pink prize pocket by our trucker 'tache wearing internet hiphopotamus Hank Hill will win this awesome race package. There's another chance to enter next month so don't miss it!





YAKETY YAK

BACK IN THE SADDLE!

AFTER A MONTH OFF JAKE'S GETTING EXCITED TO START TRAINING AGAIN...

Words by Jake Nicholls Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

Hi guys, hope you're all doing well. Unreal how bad the weather is at the moment here – I feel sorry for those caught up in all the floods. Luckily in Suffolk we haven't had any floods or anything extreme other than just plenty of rain and wind and the odd huge puddle.

As you can probably already tell by the start of this column my life hasn't been that all exciting month since I last wrote. I have just been lapping up the off season if I'm honest, every year I allow myself exactly a month of complete rest after the season which is what I have done and I feel good for it.

I had a couple of rides out for fun at the start of the month but I think I've been off a bike for three weeks now which is nice and I'm just now starting to miss it. So by the time I hop on the plane two days after Christmas and head south to New Zealand I should be gagging to ride again.

In my case that's the sh*ttest thing about being a pro rider – not enjoying riding your bike as much as you remember. The times I rode at the start of this past month I could have just got off at any moment and not worried about getting back on. The reason I was riding was that I had made a big jump in the garden while bored so I needed to try it out and KTM UK had been kind enough to lend me their new 450SX-F for a couple of weeks which I loved to bits....

But back to what I was saying. It makes me sad when I think about those last few times you ride at the end of the season and think that you didn't enjoy it all that much. I'm sure not every pro rider is the same as me and I know Herlings isn't for instance but then I'm dead certain his career will be shorter than RC's with the amount he rides because he won't keep that up for long.

I guess it's no different to cutting down trees for a living. I love getting my hands on a chainsaw and doing my best 'Ax Men' impression but someone that does it day in day out must get sick to death of it. So that's why I will only ride a handful of times from November

to January – to stay keen and get the love back. It only takes about a month before I spend every night on YouTube watching videos of MX and dream all night about it.

My passion at the moment is my bicycles. I'm very lucky to be supported by Hope Technology who makes the sickest hard parts for bicycles going. I have my shed of love at the minute which is just pedal city with my road cycle, hardtail MTB, full suspension MTB and cyclo cross bike. Cycling is my passion outside of racing and it's pretty much all I spend my money on.

I started training a week or so ago now and it's nice getting back into the fitness side of things. I haven't missed it but now I've started it I'm loving it again – I'm just missing have about 25 fried breakfasts a week now though. It's all good though and I still get to have a few beers at the weekend which I enjoy a lot as I don't get to do that once the season starts.

I'm loving being at home in Suffolk to at the moment and I really am not looking forward to going back to Belgium in February if I'm honest. A lot of people say I'm lucky living there because it's like a dream land for MX but we're fortunate in my area of the country to have a fair few tracks around and I also have my own track too so I don't feel lucky living in Belgium at all.

I would much prefer to live in sunny Suffolk all year but obviously my team is in Lommel so it wouldn't work – they like to keep a very close eye on what I'm up to and all that which is fair enough. So I'm making the most of my time here which means its bloody hard work to get me to go anywhere outside my area. I've become like my Dad – the other day we cycle into Essex briefly and I suffered from a nose bleed. Mind you most people do when they breach the Essex border. Reem, my ass!

Cheers folks and thanks for reading. Keep an eye on my Twitter for pictures of moustaches and a load of dribble.

Go hard #45!

J. Nicholls

BOOT CAMP!

TRAINING SCHEDULES OF THE RICH AND FAMOUS...

Grand Prix riders will be in the depths of their winter training schedules by the time you read this. Jeffrey Herlings recently tweeted that he'd finished his Everts 'boot camp' at the end of November and the likes of Tommy Searle and Mel Pocock will have been pounding out the circuits with trainer Kirk Gibbons at Derby College.

The next steps involve some bike time, and if the USA is a stretch too far with international pre-season races and the Italian championship set to shiver their way through January and February then southern Europe will be a popular location through the first month of 2013. Sardinia has already become a fond location for the Italian based factory KTM, Honda and Yamaha teams in the previous three years. The Island's gentler climate, accommodating tracks and isolated setting is a beneficial training base.

One rider who will be keen to make laps on the Italian soil will be Searle's former team-mate Joel Roelants. The Belgian rider – who dislocated his hip in a horrifying accident in practice for the British Grand Prix – will line-up with Steven Frossard on the factory Monster Energy Yamaha as one of three high profile rookies to MX1 in 2013 (Searle and Kawasaki Racing Team's Jeremy van Horebeek the others).

Roelants and Frossard represent the youngest line-up that Michele Rinaldi will have overseen this century – Frossard has just over a year of MX1 experience. Joel has an unusual date for his first outing on the YZ450FM. December 25 is the day he'd been given as a green light to pilot the Yamaha for the first time since his accident and operation and the determined 23 year old has said he'll be up and out of his motorhome at first light for his maiden run on the MX1 machine. Merry Christmas!



HOT DATES!

2013 FIM MOTOCROSS MX1/MX2 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP

March 2	Losail, Qatar
March 10	Si Racha, Thailand
April 1	Valkenswaard, the Netherlands
April 14	Arco di Trento, Italy
April 21	TBA, TBA
May 5	TBA, Portugal
May 19	Beto Carrero, Brazil
May 26	Guadalajara, Mexico
June 9	Ernee, France
June 16	Maggiora, Italy
June 30	Uddevalla, Sweden
July 7	Kegums, Latvia
July 14	Semigorje, Russia
July 28	Lausitzring, Germany
August 4	Loket, Czech Republic
August 18	Bastogne, Belgium
August 25	Matterley Basin, Great Britain
September 9	TBA, TBA
MXDN	
September 29	Teutschenthal, Germany



ALL CHANGE!

FOR BETTER OR WORSE YOUTHSTREAM ARE REALLY MIXING THINGS UP IN THE GPS – HERE'S WHAT OUR INSIDER THINKS ABOUT IT ALL...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photo by Sarah Gutierrez

It has now been a couple of weeks since Youthstream outlined their vision for the future of the FIM Motocross World Championship. Both with respect to overseas events that are expected to increase in number as new and more fertile economies for racing and sales are sought and for the overall marketability of the series with the suggested three moto format representing the biggest shift at the top level of the sport since the creation of MX1 and MX2 in 2004.

Youthstream – formerly Action Group until their sale of the rights to Grands Prix to Dorna in 2000 – took the move of re-installing the two moto format after a tough couple of years where the MotoGP promoters tried to condense the sport into a one race per category system similar to their gigantic asphalt scene.

Youthstream swiftly acknowledged the desire of the fanbase and competitors to again have the age-old two sprint programme even if some of their other regulations at the time – such as the abolishment of prize money – were not nearly as popular. After nine years pushing and sustaining the sport through the credit boom, political support, the economic crisis, live internet streaming and Monster Energy money, Youthstream felt the need to mix up the formula to increase stock in their product.

It was getting harder to place motocross on TV at all let alone earn from the rights (hence the birth of mx-life.tv and the reversal on the decision to abandon Motors TV coverage), it was getting harder for

clubs and circuits to host a modern Grand Prix without outside backing (thus capable territories like Brazil and Qatar came along at the right time) and manufacturers were remaining committed, but only just. Monster Energy took MXGP under its wing at a crucial moment (2010) but the principal sponsor (who also have a hefty say in AMA Supercross, a contest that is almost unrivalled for its potential) would also be looking for evolution in terms of the audience reach and expanding the excellent degree of accessibility and spectacular that MX boasts compared to other motorsports.

There was obviously a need to have a re-think. The two classes and four motos was not going to work for TV and even the most ardent fans have to admit that two 40 minute motos live on the box is simply impractical, unrealistic and often dull.

I've always supported the notion of hacking five minutes off the motos (as in the AMA) but the race time is rarely a problem at the track itself. Indeed fans have been overloaded in the past two seasons with the UEM gaining more prestige and power with the 125s and 250s as Youthstream attempt to build a pyramid for the sport and give it a firmer base (and possible richer earning potential as the Veterans and Amateurs is already a money-maker while the Women's series also went in the same direction). On TV however motocross needed a 'main event' rundown but one that didn't ditch the two moto tradition.

The current proposal ticks both boxes. Naturally it has its sceptics as it means a degree of change. Will mixing MX1 and MX2 together as a 'Super

Final' work? I've heard quite a few opinions on this and it is a something that various national championships have experimented with for years and is one of the novelties of the Motocross des Nations. Undoubtedly it will function insofar as the new 26 minute HD TV highlights package for each Grand Prix is concerned. If there is a clear distinction between MX1 and MX2 (bolder number plate colours? Coloured bibs? Coloured TV graphics?) and a way to level the playing field between the classes (staggered start? MX2 get first gate positions?) then it can also work as a spectacle.

There does need to be a clearer definition of what the results of each Grand Prix actually mean. Are we still looking at combined points totals for the final podiums? Or will the Super Final be a separately classified race by itself? If the point is to refine motocross into a sellable package then surely the rules and notion of the competition have to be as simple as possible. You also have to look at the ramifications for MX1 and MX2 altogether. If MX2, with its unpopular 23 year age limit, is seen as a stepping stone to the premier MX1 category – and this is how Youthstream have been marketing the definition for the past few seasons – then it loses some of its status simply through the amalgamation with the 450s.

The biggest obstacle in forging this 'Super Final' as the premier show of Grand Prix motocross is the lack of incentive. Why would Jeffrey Herlings push Tony Cairoli for a victory if he is already leading MX2? Racer's pride will carry someone so far, but perhaps not enough to conjure the thrills that people

will come to expect from this one-off 'Super Final' without extra points at stake or a cash bonus. Maybe the Super Final winner could earn 30 points compared to 25?

In only a matter of months Qatar and Thailand will provide small previews to this system and with MX1 and MX2 mixed for just two motos it is worth remembering that the outlined proposal for 2014 is still only that. The FIM rule book has yet to alter, which means plenty of discussions will be taking place over the next seven to eight months before the Motocross Commission finally make ratification.

As mentioned, if a it's broken let's fix it mentality currently exists at Youthstream then it's for good reason. Like an airline, the promoters have already exhausted many ways of looking to make revenue and for the sport to pay for itself. Contrary to what many might think, this is not to line their own pockets (of course it is a business, although Luongo and co would have sold-up years ago if that was their sole motivation) but an attempt to prop motocross up on its own footing.

Traditional routes such as TV commissions and circuit sanction fees for a GP have waned, so that leaves sponsorship as the main source and for this reason motocross cannot afford to go stale. Three motos in 2014 might not be the answer, and I'm positive that we'll see some refinements before any wholesale switch comes into place but the pertinent issue at the moment is the reason for the overhaul and if it is to inject lifeblood or a surge to bloom motocross to a wider audience then I'm all for it.



SHOW N' TELL!

AWESOME ATTENDANCE FOR PROMOTO'S LAST EVER DIRT BIKE SHOW...

Over 20,000 paying punters packed their way into the 2012 Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh Park over four fantastic days. The show definitely hit the spot with visitors with way more bikes and off-road stars than ever before from the worlds of trials, motocross and enduro.

As well as all the new bikes and performance parts on display in the main hall, business was booming in the dedicated retail sector while the activity zone kept kids amused with balance bike racing, mountain bike shows and the opportunity to partake in the My First Honda Licence riding experience. The majority of the best stuff was going down on the main stage though where Jack Burnicle was interviewing off-road stars in his own inimitable style.

Behind the scenes a new owner took control of the show from Promoto

Limited who had built the show's reputation over a 13 year period. While the show owners are different it's expected the legacy left by Promoto will continue as head honcho Dave Watson explains.

"When we launched the Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh Park back in 2000 it was with a view to provide a quality exhibition that was good for the industry as a whole," says Dave. "We believe we have achieved this aim and it is now time for the original partners to step aside and allow the show to continue developing. We are confident that it will do just that and we trust the new organising team will retain the support of the dirt biking trade and public."

Dates for the 2013 International Dirt Bike Show at Stoneleigh Park have already been confirmed as October 31 to November 3.



ADAM N' EVE IT!

WHATLEY'S BACK WITH EMBO
FOR 2013...

After Kristian Whatley had a bit of a disagreement with team boss Roy Emberson when he last rode for him in 2011 nobody would have thought that the pair would have hooked up again but as this photo – that may have been shot with a potato – shows the two are back together and ready to go racing.

"The boy can ride – there's no doubt about it," says Roy. "He done well for us last time but then he got that injury and other things didn't work out but I'm not worried about all that. We've had a good chat and agreed a deal. I'm happy and he's happy so I'm looking forward to it and now we're getting to work."

K-What is equally as 'appy. "The Yamaha suits me well and Roy and the team build awesome race bikes so I'm pumped to be going back to a team and a set up that fits. I'm now working hard on getting my fitness back and I can't wait to get started. Hopefully I can get on a roll and challenge for a title. I want one and Roy deserves a Maxxis British championship as much as anyone."



PRINCE'S POSSE!

SUZUKI SIGN UP NEIL PRINCE TO
RUN OFFICIAL UK TEAM...

Following the shock news that TAS were pulling out of motocross once more Suzuki GB have turned to 1994 British 125cc champ Neil Prince to run their official UK race squad for 2013. As well as being a badass racer back in the day Prince brings a stack of managerial experience with him and although he doesn't own an iron is pretty much the ideal guy to run the all-new Heads & All Threads Suzuki Team.

On the track it's Graeme Irwin who will lead the team into battle and he'll no doubt be a contender in the ultra-competitive MX2 class. Meanwhile Luke Burton will take care of business in MX1 with Jordan McClelland doing the do in MX2.

"To agree terms with Suzuki GB to run their official effort in the UK is a great honour indeed," says Neil. "I've followed the progress of the Tyco Suzuki team over the last few years and been hugely impressed with the speed of the bikes and reliability so when the chance came to talk I was very keen. We've already tried the all-new 2013 RM-Zs and we're very impressed. Suzuki has without a doubt given us the tools to do our job in 2013 – we just need to do the rest now."



IRN-BRY

SUPERFLY BRY!

AS A FULL-TIME MOTOCROSS PRO BRY'S
LIKE THE COOLEST GUY ALIVE...

Words by Bryan MacKenzie Photo by Ray Archer

I like how being a motocross rider is essentially an international sign of being a 'cool guy'. Not cool like the Geordie Shore lads think of themselves but in an approachable, friendly, socially acceptable kind of way. No matter where in the world you are if you can get across the fact that you race or are into MX be it by word dropping, an image on your phone, industry clothing, a sneaky wee motocross sticker or whatever then to a massive number of people that's all the I.D. you need and you instantly walk straight into their friend zone.

I've had a lot of this recently with tradesmen turning up to my house and dealings with new people thanks to the ongoing works in my crib. But when people ask what I do and I reply with "I race motorbikes" their attitude towards me changes and they become even friendlier than before like I'm no longer a nuisance and each and every one of them has a story to tell about their experiences with bikes.

Pretty recently too I was up in Aberdeenshire presenting the awards at the Aberdeen and District Motorcycle Club. I was supposed to be taking Ashley with me but at the last minute she had to bail and my replacement guy BC sat up playing COD until 4am resulting in him bumping the trip too so I was left to fly it solo. It's pretty daunting having to go to something like that where you don't know many people and to be committed to a whole evening where if the people aren't friendly you could be sat there like a spare prick for the longest time.

But luckily it's the motocross fraternity we're in and no sooner had I finished handing out the awards then I was shouted over by a table of dudes. Initially these guys must have been up for giving me a proper grilling about all things motocross and I was in the firing line for a bit of playful banter as they asked for my opinion and they gave me theirs.

A short while later and after holding my own one of the guys turned to me and said "you know what, we thought you were gonna be a c****". Luckily for me it turns out I wasn't and before long I was having a drink with these guys that I wasn't allowed to refuse. In a return gesture I got the next round in and before long the presentation was ending and I was making my way to the local night spot in town with my new buddies where we had an awesome time!

The funny thing about this story though is the fact that out of all the people I was out with I only learnt one of their names! I managed to have an awesome laugh with a bunch of folk that I had never met before and only known for a couple of hours and still to this day

don't know who the hell they are but purely because of our shared interest in shredding dirt bikes it didn't matter a sh*t. I like that about our sport!

Anyway, it's begun folks! The weather man is starting to unload cartridges out of his weather gun and he's gonna start shooting down ride days like a leader board topper at Duck Hunt! I've just got back in the door from our first failed riding attempt of this off season and I'm devastated at the prospect of now having to go back to the gym to spend 'X' amount of time on the spin bike after I'd been excited to spend the day training outside.

To be honest it was no great surprise after having to defrost the window of the van at 11am to actually navigate my way to the track but ever the optimist I still had high hopes and never really considered not riding. I've actually been doing a bit of riding recently which for this time of year is pretty unusual for me. I've not been out a lot but still once or maybe twice a week since I took delivery of the new steed. The reason being – I straight up love it!

All season I've been telling BC how I haven't been fully comfortable on the bike and we've been altering little bits here and there, buying new suspension and all that just trying to get comfortable. Absolutely no doubt the motor was strong and the bike was good but my biggest nemesis this whole year has been trying to get confident – especially in sand!

I just couldn't get into it and all my results in the sand through 2012 were pretty poor as I really struggled with confidence at those races. I always felt that the back end of my bike was too high and weighting the front end too much – giving me the feeling that I was going to swap out a lot. We started running 120mm sag by the end of the season to try and make the bike squat so I could confidently steer it with the rear more.

But it wasn't until I took delivery of my new KX250F and threw my leg over her for the first time that I realised that after all this time I had been trying to make my KTM feel like my Kawasaki! Literally as soon as I popped the clutch and rode her around the first lap I thought to myself 'that's what I've been after'.

Now please don't get me wrong, I loved my KTM too and clearly had a sterling season this year but I guess after riding Kawasakis for 10 out of the last 12 years I must have adapted my style and technique to suit and so getting back on a Kawasaki to me is like snoozing my alarm at 6am every morning – it just feels right!

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#121



JONTY'S BOX

LOWS N' HIGHS!

SEEMINGLY GETTING WORSE BEFORE IT'LL HOPEFULLY GET BETTER THE 2013 SUPERENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP LOOKS SET TO BE ANYTHING BUT SUPER!

Words and photo by Jonty Edmunds

With just two rounds confirmed, the 2013 Superenduro World Championship isn't exactly making waves as a series that's going from strength to strength! Fact is the series seems to have pretty much gone to sh*t once again. Talk about two steps forward, one step backwards!

Now promoted by the same company that brought sweeping changes to the Enduro World Championship it doesn't take a genius to work out that with two, possibly three, events the 2013 Superenduro World Championship isn't exactly going to be a classic. Fact is that while the US Endurocross series goes from strength to strength our little European championship finds itself well and truly stranded on the rocks.

In the States the Endurocross series is both organised and promoted by the same company with the people in charge largely involved in Endurocross and little else. Experienced people too might I add. It's a system that works and one that is working very well.

Making indoor events pay can't be easy, certainly when arenas have to be rented, dirt and machinery shipped in and start and prize money paid. But it's the adding to that of the 'promoters fee' that seems, in part, to have tripped up this winter's Superenduro series. First to opt out were the Italian organisers, who themselves had aspirations of promoting the series. Not wanting to assist the company that got the job they were after resulted in the loss of one of the very best indoor enduro events.

Secondly, the Barcelona organisational team still haven't given any word as to whether they want to be a part of the series. In both Italy and Spain successful stand alone indoor enduro events have set the benchmark for how Superenduro events should be run. Paying a promoter for the privilege of doing something they're well capable of doing on their own does seem a little daft. Even more foolish when restrictions are imposed with regards sponsors!

Last year the Polish Superenduro event was

first class. With the organisers taking the bold step of running an indoor enduro event for the first time with a few tweaks to the track they delivered a memorable event. And there's no reason to suspect that this year's event will be any different. After that it's anyone's guess. The only other event scheduled in for the series is in France – one week before the opening EWC race in Chile.

Finding organisers willing to commit to and organise indoor enduro events in Europe is a bit like finding the end of a rainbow. Putting financial hurdles in front of organisers is absolutely the best way of frightening them off and forcing them to ask themselves if it's all worth it.

ABC Communications claim that once this winter's Superenduro series is out the way they'll have time to properly plan next year's series which they're suggesting will feature an event in the UK. But having unsuccessfully tried for the past three or four years to turn indoor enduro racing in Europe into a viable championship might it be best to now forget the idea and return to a series of independent events? Just like it was...

I know it's easy to look back at events with rose tinted glasses and say things were better way back when but when the Barcelona, Genoa and Munich indoor enduro events were all stand alone affairs they were all great. I'd even go as far as to say better than they are now because each had its own unique way of doing things, a unique atmosphere, and while the racing was hard and fast the attitude of the racers was the complete opposite.

Maybe the Superenduro series can be turned around and moulded into a viable championship. But the give it one more year attitude is wearing thin after four years. Fingers crossed the series will turn a corner and becomes something bigger and better. I guess as always only time will tell...

Jonty

PRE-MIX PRIDE!

OIL BURNERS FIGHT BACK FROM THE BRINK...

Proving there's still life in the old oil burners yet Sherco have added their name to the growing list of manufactures now producing pre-mix machines. At the recent EICMA international bike show in Milan the French bike builders unveiled their brand new SE250T. The electric start 250cc two-stroke will go into production early in 2013 with the SE300T expected to become available by mid season.

In 2013 Frenchman Fabien Planet will switch from the E1 class to campaign the SE300T in the Enduro 3 World Championship while the satellite supported Moto Pulsion team will have Julien Gauthier race the SE250T in E2.

With KTM, Husaberg, Gas Gas, TM, Beta Husqvarna and now Sherco responding to growing demand of punters wanting to ride two-stroke machinery it seems the future is still bright for two-stroke in enduro.



MINTED MANXMAN!

NEW CURRENCY – AND TEAM – FOR DAVID KNIGHT...

After numerous weeks of speculation David Knight has now confirmed that he has formed his own team for the 2013 season and will compete on Honda machinery. The three-time enduro world champion – who ended this year fourth overall in the Enduro 3 World Championship while also picking up his tenth BEC title – will race a Honda CRF450. Expected to contest the entire EWC season along with selected endurocross and extreme enduro events, the Manxman faces a busy season of competition.

Along with announcing his new team for 2013 Knight also launched his own form of legal tender on the Isle of Man. Creating another little bit of history, Manx authorities revealed that Knight will be featured on his very own 50p coin.

"I feel very proud to be on a Manx coin and to have my motorcycle achievements recognised," confirmed David. "It's a big honour. I will definitely be carrying a few of these coins around in my pocket next year in the hope they will bring me some luck."

While David will carry the cash at all times don't expect him to reach into his pocket and spend any – he just don't roll that way...

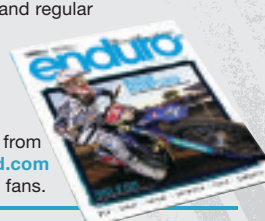
ENDURO ILLUSTRATED

SEASON REVIEW AVAILABLE NOW

Now in its fifth year the latest edition of Enduro Illustrated – the Enduro World Championship review annual produced by DBR's intrepid enduro correspondent Jonty Edmunds – is now available. And as ever it's packed full of enduro imagery awesomeness!

With Enduro 2 World Champ Pela Renet featured on the cover, the 116-page super heavyweight coffee table magazine again allows you the chance to relive what was a truly fantastic EWC season. Breaking down all the goings on from the eight-round championship, in addition to two bumper image galleries and regular features like We Three Kings and Best Of The Year, Enduro Illustrated #5 pays tribute to the great Mika Ahola.

Available exclusively from www.enduro-illustrated.com it's a must for all enduro fans.



Always looking great in blue Eero Remes should fit right in at TM



YOUNG GUN!

WADE YOUNG WINS THE ROOF OF AFRICA

Following an impressive win at this year's Roof of Africa 16-year old Wade Young is a name to remember for the future. With the 45th edition of the Roof of Africa in Lesotho signalling the last hard enduro event of the 2012 season the event attracted a world-class line-up of hard enduro specialists all of which were beaten by the unknown rookie.

Almost 400 competitors from over 12 different nations arrived in the Mountain Kingdom of Lesotho to take on three gruelling days of competition that covered 450km. With defending champion Graham Jarvis (Husqvarna), three-time winner of the race Chris Birch (KTM), Andreas Lettenbichler (Husqvarna), Darryl Curtis (KTM), Paul Bolton (KTM) and Ben Hemingway (KTM) all in attendance the stage was set for an intense fight for victory. However, no one expected them to be upstaged by the 16-year-old Roof of Africa rookie.

Qualifying second overall behind fellow South African Mark Tørlage on day one, Young quickly made his intentions known when the event began in earnest on day two. With competitors facing a 245km long stage of tough terrain in scorching heat, Young quickly worked his way to the front of the field. Showing maturity and skill beyond his years, he quickly extended his lead as favourites like Jarvis and Birch failed to react to his challenge. Ending day one a comfortable 10 minutes ahead of Jarvis, Young was the clear overnight leader of

the race.

With the third and final day of the event taking in a slightly shorter 187km route, Young kept charging. Working his way through some of the hardest terrain that South Africa has to offer, he finally crossed the finish line as the winner of the 2012 Roof of Africa and became the first South African to win the race since 2007.

Adding further delight to the South African celebrations, KTM's Altus de Wet worked his way past a tiring Jarvis in the final moments of the event to claim the runner-up position. For Jarvis, the Roof of Africa marked one of only two defeats this season – the other coming at the Erzbergrodeo in June. Expected to easily defend his Roof of Africa crown, Jarvis immediately ran into trouble when he got lost during day one. Ending his day over eight minutes behind the leader the Husaberg rider faced a difficult task to challenge for the win. Enjoying a relatively trouble free ride on day two, he soon worked his way back up to second overall. However, enduring further GPS issues on the third and final day of racing he eventually slipped back to third overall.

Competing in his 21st Roof of Africa, KTM's Darryl Curtis admitted to having entered the event somewhat underprepared due to concentrating on his assault on the forthcoming Dakar Rally. Nevertheless, the South African proved there's no substitute for experience as he ended his race in a well-earned fourth place.

MOVERS AND SHAKERS!

WHO'S HEADED WHERE IN THE EWC...

As the music begins to die down and the game of musical chairs comes to a stop all the top riders in the EWC paddock have finally found a home for the coming season.

As one of the strongest riders in the latter half of this season, Italy's Thomas Oldrati caught the eye of numerous team managers looking for an Enduro 1 class rider for 2013. With rumours speculating that he might take Salvini's place at Husqvarna the 23 year old has confirmed his signature with the Husaberg Factory team for the next two seasons.

Oldrati, who actually ended the year with the Swedish manufacture will become the first rider in the history of the company to participate in E1. For 2013 he'll be hungry to improve on his position of third overall in the championship.

After two solid years with Husqvarna, which saw him score two

podium results in E2 during 2012 Italy's Alex Salvini is off. Announcing his decision to move on Salvini will join HM Honda but remain in E2 for 2013. Salvini will join his new team-mate Frenchman Rodrig Thain who will compete in E1 for at least another season with HM Honda.

With Spain's Ivan Cervantes now officially confirmed with the KTM Enduro Factory team for 2013, Finland's Eero Remes has been left with no option but to move out. Having begun his enduro career with KTM back in 2009 the former overall ISDE winner will ride for TM Racing next year.

Remes, who will compete in E1, strengthens the line up of the Italian team for 2013 as he joins Aigar Leok and Antti Hellsten under the TM awning. Leok remains in E3 as he attempts to challenge KTM's Christophe Nambotin for next year's title while Hellsten will compete on two-stroke machinery in E2.

ROCKY ROAD!

ALEX ROCKWELL RETURNS TO MPS HUSQVARNA...

After a solid season campaigning the Enduro Junior World Championship with Husaberg, Alex Rockwell moves to MPS Racing for next year. The Manxman, who last rode for the Husqvarna supported team in 2010 will focus solely on domestic championships while taking in selected rounds of the European Enduro Championship.

"I've enjoyed my time racing in the World Enduro series but my aim for next year is to focus primarily on the British Championships," says Rocky. "With the support available to me from MPS as the official UK Husqvarna

Enduro team, I'm confident I can achieve my goal of becoming E2 British Enduro Champion in 2013".

Rockwell will join rising youngster and newly crowned E1 British Enduro Champion Jack Rowland at MPS.



THE ITALIAN JOB!

THE BORDONE FERRARI SAGA CONTINUES...

After their flamboyant and much publicised arrival on the enduro and rally scene it's now clear that all is not well at Bordone Ferrari's Italian headquarters. It looks like their ship has sunk before it's even sailed. Following the emphatic launch of their rally bike – the Mi1 – at the EWC GP of Italy in July the Italian firm have remained unnervingly quiet.

First knowledge of their money woes came to light when Italian Thomas Oldrati split from the enduro team in August after stating 'a lack of payment' as his main cause for concern. Now as the Dakar Rally quickly approaches more riders have jumped from the seemingly sinking ship. Chilean Francisco Lopez was first to leave with Spaniard Jordi Viladoms following

a couple of days later.

While not actually saying exactly why he's made the dramatic move at such a late stage in his preparation for the race, Viladoms has confirmed he'll ride for Husqvarna through a satellite supported team called Tamarugal XC.

"I knew it was going to be complicated to arrive to the Dakar, so all I can do is thank everybody for their cooperation in such a short time. I hope to be able to reward their faith through my results," commented Jordi, who finished fourth in the 2012 Dakar Rally.

So for now with TM Racing also revoking their association with Bordone Ferrari and launching their own TM Racing 450 Rally bike it's seems the saga that is Bordone Ferrari rumbles on...

PC blitzes the
Gatorback whoops



© Rob Koy

ORLANDO BLOOM!

**BATTLING BRIT PAUL COATES BLOSSOMS
AT FLORIDIAN CLASSIC...**

Words by Brent Stallo/vurbmoto.com

Amateur racing is all fun and games – until it's not all fun and games anymore. It's funny how quickly something can go from a fun hobby to a job and how without delay a dream you've had your entire life can vanish in an instant or miraculously come true. That's the stage of life English expat Paul Coates is in right now and he's just getting started.

Over America's Thanksgiving holiday Coates took part in one of amateur motocross' most aged traditions – the 41st annual Thor Winter National Olympics which is better known as the Mini O's. One of the most competitive amateur races of the season the Mini O's was made famous through its unique structure of hosting both a supercross and motocross portion during the week.

"I think having a supercross and outdoor track to race on is good," claims Coates. "I think that's why the industry comes out to watch this race – so they can get an idea of who can ride supercross as well as outdoors."

For Coates – who lives and trains not far from the event at MTF in Cairo, Georgia – this year would prove to be one of his more important attempts at proving himself amongst America's fastest talent. And while his results were

impressive in his mind there is still work left to be done.

"The week was up and down and with such a tough A class that's bound to happen. You have to start up front every moto in order to be up front. Even the 10th place guy was tough to get around. In the motos that I got good starts I did well and the ones where I didn't it was tough. A lot of people were congratulating me after the event at the track and online, which was nice.

"But in my mind I was like, 'Don't congratulate me on that. I want to win and I wasn't able to get that done at Mini O's so there is more work to do.' I need to show people that I can do what guys like Cooper Webb are doing. He's not the only guy who can do that. He is a great rider that knows how to get it done when it counts and I need to show the industry that I can do that as well. Next year is going to be good. I'll be ready."

Despite not being completely satisfied with his performance, Coates was able to cap off the week with numerous podium finishes against what many are calling one of the most stacked pro classes in recent memory. 2013 will be a pivotal season for Coates as he begins to focus more on his job than his hobby. But by the sound of it this expat is up for the challenge.

DIRT DIGGERS!

MCGRATH HANGS TOUGH AT TROY LEE'S DAY IN THE DIRT...

Words and photos by Steve Cox

The Troy Lee Designs promoted Red Bull Day in the Dirt went off over the American Thanksgiving weekend at Glen Helen and like usual it was a rousing success. And as usual there were lots of accusations of racers cutting the course. But the thing about A Day in the Dirt is that it's all about having fun – there are winners in each class but there really aren't any losers. Since the focus is on having fun it's hard to leave the track without a smile.

The event started on Friday with the FMF two-stroke race. While the pits were still filling up – since the two main days are Saturday and Sunday – the people who did get there early enough got to see none other than Jeremy McGrath take on the Glen Helen course on his 1996 Honda CR250R which he rode to a nearly perfect season of 14 AMA Supercross wins out of 15 rounds. It's actually a 1993 model with 1996 graphics on it – he raced the 1993 bike for four years from '93 to '96 before Hondas got aluminium frames and he switched to Suzuki for a year and then to Yamaha.

"It took a while to adjust to racing

the old bike because you have to try really hard to get the bike to work, you know?" says McGrath. "It took a few laps but it comes back to you. I was really happy with the way that bike ran. It was sweet man – so much fun! The noise alone was just awesome..."

It's not just the power delivery that made adjustment a little difficult either.

"It's a whole different set up! Like, the bars are a little higher, the bike is pretty narrow, the seat is really slippery – it's amazing all of the little things that you don't really notice until you get on an older bike."

That being said McGrath could only muster second place in the two-stroke race behind Sean Collier who was riding on an even older KX500 – he was shredding.

However, McGrath did end up pulling down wins in the Vet Pro class and in Saturday's team-race event with team-mate Axell Hodges. On Sunday, McGrath raced the biggest team race of the weekend – the Moto a Go Go – with Hodges and finished an unofficial second behind the KTM team of Baja 1000 racers Ivan Ramirez and Kurt Caselli. I say unofficial because Collier's

team was scored as the winner somehow even though he nor his team-mate ever actually passed McGrath's team or the KTM team. Collier's team just showed up in the lead late in the race.

McGrath was pumped on the weekend but he always has a target on his back when he shows up to race against the locals.

"For me these days it seems like there's always competition. It's not like it used to be," McGrath laughed. "So it doesn't really matter if it's some no name dude or whatever. Axell Hodges and myself had a good battle in the team race just now. I think we finished second. I won the Vet race yesterday. That was cool. And then Axell and I got second on Saturday also in the Stunt GP. More importantly, I'm fine. I didn't crash. I got taken out in the team race Saturday by some guy... He was falling and just came across the track. He hit me and knocked me down. I knocked him straight back up and he didn't crash! But I do feel like I have a target on my back but I don't mind. It pushes me, too. I don't know. I guess I'd rather be me... I'll take the target. It's fine."



McGrath chills out
between motos



Sean Collier was hauling
on his elderly KX500



MC's as stylish as ever...



MONEY TALKS!

MITCH PAYTON'S HAVING TO COUNT THE PENNIES...

Even with all of the products they sell and with their reputation as being the top team in the USA 250cc class the Pro Circuit team simply wouldn't be able to go racing without a big-name sponsor like Monster Energy.

"It's just way too expensive," says Mitch Payton. "We literally couldn't do it if it weren't for Monster Energy or another big sponsor like that. It would be impossible. That's just how much it costs to race nowadays."

HOT DATES!

LUCAS OIL AMA MOTOCROSS CHAMPIONSHIP

There's another mix up of the AMA motocross championship with the Freestone and Steel City Nationals replaced by a new round at Muddy Creek Raceway in Tennessee and one that's still to be announced. There's controversy surrounding the WMX series too as that drops from eight rounds to three in 2013 – the chicks'll get it on at Hangtown, High Point and Southwick...

May 18	Hangtown, California
May 25	Thunder Valley, Colorado
June 1	Bristol, Tennessee
June 8	High Point, Pennsylvania
June 22	Budds Creek, Maryland
June 29	Southwick, Massachusetts
July 6	Red Bud, Michigan
July 20	Washougal, Washington
July 27	Millville, Minnesota
August 10	Unadilla, New York
August 17	TBA
August 24	Lake Elsinore, California



HOME ALONE!

NO TEAM-MATE FOR REED AT TWOTWO THIS TERM...

Wanting a second racer on the TwoTwo Motorsports team, Chad Reed almost had it done for 2013 but couldn't get a commitment from Honda. "You know, the goal this year was to have a second rider," said Reed. "We had the budget to do it. We had everything in place. Unfortunately, truth of the matter is that Honda didn't come to the table with a bike like they were supposed to. So, I'm a little disappointed in that."

"For a little bit there we talked to Ryan Villopoto, but I think that was an unrealistic goal. But I think that Dean Wilson was a very realistic goal. And not only did we lose him once – we lost him twice! I was pretty bummed and pretty pissed off about how all that went down. I felt that we were in a good position to have a good, young talent. Not only would he be good for us as a brand and a team, I think he would have been good for the Honda brand. So, it was disappointing to see how it all went down."



AMERICAN IDIOT

PREP STEPS!

HOW RACES AND CHAMPIONSHIPS ARE ACTUALLY WON IN THE OFF-SEASON, KINDA...

Words and photo by **Steve Cox**

The fans are in a privileged position in motocross – actually, in most sports. They show up at round one, or watch it on TV and it's like magic – the racers are all with their new teams, on their new bikes, wearing their new gear and they're ready to do battle.

This doesn't just happen. The off-season which is normally kind of a slow season for news – for obvious reasons – is when most of the real work is done. Gains are made in the off-season. That's what it's for. Racers make fitness gains in the off-season and teams make equipment and personnel gains in the off-season. It's when the real magic happens. Everything that you see at the races come January was planned for and made possible between October and the end of December.

That's why living in Southern California it's always interesting to head out to the test tracks and shoot photos and video of what's going on out there. Sometimes you show up and you're simply not allowed to do that because you might catch some new gadget on a bike or sometimes it's because the sponsors aren't right on the rider's gear or fenders. And it's just a good idea to listen to the team managers who nix this stuff since technically it's private property. But if you catch them at Milestone or another public test track it's all fair game.

The other big deal that I mentioned earlier is fitness gains for the racers. With the gruelling schedule these guys – especially the 450cc racers – endure it's not only tough to make gains during the season it's actually not very smart to try unless you absolutely have no other choice. The only time it's really a good idea is if you were injured and couldn't make any gains. Otherwise, rest is one of the biggest keys to fitness (it's the one key that I've absolutely

mastered) and if you're pushing yourself too hard during the week between races, many times you won't have anything left in the tank when you get to the actual races. And that's what you're getting paid for – racing. You're not getting paid to be in shape, you're getting paid to put in results at the races. Ultimately, the teams don't care if you're 230 pounds as long as you're winning.

That's ultimately where a lot of the value comes from in racing events like the Monster Energy Cup. While it's not quite a supercross race, it's really close and it gives teams an opportunity to test things out in a racing environment which is a big deal. You can only test so much when it's you and another guy on the track racing a watch but how well do these new forks work if you're not in an ideal racing line and you're trying to pass someone? Or how well does this tyre work when you have to square off a corner to go by someone? You just can't know unless you race with it.

So, when the Monster Energy Kawasaki team debuted the Showa SFF (Separate Function Fork) system at the Monster Energy Cup it's not like they hadn't tested it but they knew they had to put some racing laps on the forks to really get an idea of how they worked. Depending on what they thought after that event, they'll either leave them as they are, make drastic changes or even decide to stick with what they had in 2012.

So, remember that when you catch the early races on TV. The guy doing the winning is the guy who did the most this off-season and whose team did likewise in order to make sure they were as absolutely prepared as possible come main event time at Anaheim 1.



RESULTS

SKEGNESS BEACH RACE

- 1 Nathan Watson Honda
- 2 Ben Watson KTM
- 3 Carlton Husband KTM
- 4 Dan Thornhill KTM
- 5 John Robson KTM

Ben Watson chases brother Nathan home



WATSONS' WAY!

NATHAN AND BEN KICK BUTT IN BEACH RACE BONANZA...

Photos by Mike Wood and ch-images.co.uk

The Watson brothers dominate the AMCA's Skegness Beach Race with Nathan grabbing the grand first prize from under the nose of his kid brother Ben in the super deep Lincolnshire sand. Unbelievably lucky with the weather for the second year running, conditions are ideal for the race that takes place each November (it's still not too late to donate) in the awesome beach resort.

DB Racing Honda's Nev Bradshaw

takes an early lead after sharing the holeshot with all-rounder Ryan Stavelly although Nathan, Ben and James Lassu are all chasing hard. However, Nev, James and Ryan all have technical troubles which allow the Watsons to run away with it. At the end of the three hours Nathan's notched up a whopping 45 laps to take the win by a clear two laps ahead of Ben who himself is two laps up on the third place finisher Carlton Husband.



Nathan and t'other brother Ryan - he was 11th...



Bradshaw breaks down



There's no stopping Nathan Watson



MASTER BLASTERS!

DATES RESET FOR AMATEUR DRAMATICS...

Due to pesky changes in the GP and British championship calendars the AMCA have had no choice but to shuffle round the dates for their Wulfsport British Masters too. While full details of all the venues haven't been released just yet - Hawkstone, Foxhill, Whitby and Pontrilas have all been confirmed as definite though - the new dates have. Check out the dates below and

if you need any more info then log on to www.britishmastersmx.com...

- Round 1** March 9/10
- Round 2** April 27/28
- Round 3** May 25/26
- Round 4** TBA
- Round 5** July 13/14
- Round 6** August 17/18
- Round 7** September 7/8



GREAT SCOTT!

THE AMATEUR NATIONALS ARE BACK FOR 2013 – WOOP WOOP...

Dazzling Darren Hudson's awesome series for amateur, two-stroke, veteran and female racers is back again for another year or dirt bike debauchery at some of the UK's favourite race tracks. The series kicks off towards the end of March at the fantabulous FatCat and steamrolls its way around the country before finishing where it started in October. Race action at all the rounds last season was a bit special as were the Saturday night shindigs. If you wanna get in on the action download a registration form from scottnationals.co.uk and get yourself signed up!

March 23/24 **FatCat Motoparc, Yorkshire**
 April 14 **Condover, Shropshire**
 May 5/6 **Hawkstone Park, Shropshire**
 June 2 **Brampton, Cumbria**
 July 28 **TBA**
 August 10/11 **Farleigh Castle, Wiltshire**
 September 22 **Long Lane, Shropshire**
 October 6 **FatCat Motoparc, Yorkshire**



If you love mud you'll love the Wild n' Woolly

BOXING CLEVER!

IT'S ALL SYSTEMS GO FOR WILD N' WOOLLY...

After a one-off visit to Airfield Farm in 2011 the traditional Boxing Day mudfest known as the Wild and Woolly returns to its spiritual home of Arm Farm, Blisworth for its 87th running on December 26. The charity bash kicks off at 11am and lasts for an hour or so meaning you can go check it all out before returning home to eat more Turkey and watch old films on telly.

After winning his 10th Wild and Woolly last year Ryan Griffiths declared he'd never race the event again so unless he's a dirty fibber this year's race should be wide open with a different victor crowned. There's only one way to find out though and that's get yourself there to NN7 3EF t'day after Christmas – or get next month's DBR, I guess...



Dangerous, the Colonel and Hucklebutt get cosy

DANGEROUS PARTY TIME!

LEE SEEMS TO BE WAY MORE WIDE OPEN IN THE OFF SEASON THAN HE WAS ALL SUMMER...

Words by Lee Dunham Photo by the Masked Marvel

I'm shattered right now and I'm not sure what's harder – the racing season or the off season. It's so worth it though with so many cool things happening at the moment for me. Whether it is going to bike shows, attending Maxxis Kawasaki related functions or even going to trophy presentation evenings – everyone seems to be buzzing and really happy with news of the new season.

I'm really stoked with the new set up of our camp! Maxxis have put in a huge input and their new tyre range is awesome! We tested and developed some new patterns and also compounds this year and the improvements are huge. It's going to be awesome working with Ando and Couttsy next year and hopefully I can learn a lot when out training and testing!

I usually have a long time off the bike each year but at the moment I can't wait to get back on it and to a track to spin some laps. The start of a new season is always a mega feeling with fresh bikes and colours, fresh kit, possibly a new number and if you're in a new team then it's a whole fresh new look! I don't know anyone that's not buzzin' for it!

This off season I've taken on two guys to train. I'm pretty please to be involved with Paul Neale (twice third in the MX2 AMCA champs) and also Daniel Cooper (BSB road racer, IOM TT hero and general racing between the hedges legend). Both guys are super keen and we've been working together for a short spell. After an initial fitness test we've set some goals that are definitely up there but within reach! It's definitely been tough pushing them and you always know when the going gets a bit tougher as instead of banter in the group everything goes silent – which is always a bonus with Cooper...

Last month it was my birthday so myself and a mate threw a bit of a party. That turned out to be one funny night! The highlight being two friends bringing a

250 KTM with no front mudguard, dropped down handlebars, BMX helmets and a helmet cam, no tops, old school MX race pants and also boot on top the dance floor. They got the crowd going ballistic – then held the bike on the 'gunvor' while tapping the kill switch and lighting the dance floor up with 14 inch flames. It was awesome! The helmet camera video is on my Facebook page for anyone wanting to watch it!

It was good to see Huck there and also Suggsy from BikerFM. I still remember the show we used to do at BikerFM studios and that was definitely a blast. Huck was on top form at the party and we had so much fun! After a few ciders – I grabbed a taxi home with my girlfriend to her house and apparently I had sold a job to our taxi driver about a wheel bearing or something! I had some guy ringing me up in our office the day after. Oops!

Other parties I've been rocking have included the Passion Racing Kawasaki UK team party and I also presented the awards at the Shrewsbury Motocross Club awards evening! Both of them were awesome. If anyone is thinking of joining the AMCA in the Shropshire area I'd certainly recommend speaking to these guys – they're all really enthusiastic!

This is my last column now until January 2013 (maybe ever if our Christmas pressies are sh*t – Team DBR) so I guess I'd better wish all you guys a Merry Christmas and a very Happy New Year. I hope you all have a great festive period and make sure you eat lots but train more!

Finally I'd like to say farewell to Charley Sargent who sadly passed away last month. Mark Hucklebridge and I attended her funeral and it was a lovely send off to a fantastic motocross enthusiast and chirpy young lady who lost her life sadly way too early. Race in peace, Charley.

Until next time...

Lee Dunham

PHOTO OF THE MONTH!

This is a picture of my two-year-old daughter Angel reading the latest issue of DBR. We actually only got into dirt biking when we saw Peppa Pig would be appearing at our local round of the Red Bull Pro Nationals so we went to check out the action and we're big fans now!

Rebecca, via email



MEMBER OF THE MONTH

Her **dirtZone** loyalty points total show that **Katie Upton** is a **dirtZone** fanatic. Ms Upton has uploaded a huge number of photos (including that heelclicker shot), videos, polls, chatter topics and reviews since she joined the best off-road social network on the planet. When she's not on **dirtZone**, Katie can be found recovering from one of her many crashes before posting POV pictures of them on **dirtZone**, creating stuff out of Monster cans before uploading images of them on **dirtZone** or even making her own race numbers before showing them off – on **dirtZone**. Amazingly J-Lill's not tried flirting with Katie just yet but that's only because he knows she'd kick his Lilley ass...



Muc-Off

If your **dirtZone** post appears on this page you'll win a one-litre bottle of marvellous Muc-Off bike cleaner* – unless you live outside Britain in which case we'll send you some of Muc-Off's brilliant brushes and wipes instead...

*One bottle per member per month

WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN! WIN!

FIND J-LAW'S LUNCHBOX AND WIN SOME AWESOME KNOX ORYX GLOVES...

Since Suttie sneaked away with J-Law's lunchbox at the Bassenthwaite GP back in the summer Jamie's been a little grumpy about it. In fact he's so peeved he's hooked up with his long-term sponsor Knox to offer every DBR reader who spots his lunchbox the chance to win a pair of his favourite gloves!

Knox knows that getting injured sucks which is why the Cockermouth protection specialist goes the extra mile to produce the most protective products around. Jamie knows this too and he's a massive fan of the Oryx gloves that are lightweight and

comfortable but have SPS Inside – that's Knox's patented Scaphoid and Palm Protection System.

To be in with a chance of winning a pair of Oryx gloves all you have to do is let us know on which page J-Law's lunchbox is hiding. When you've figured out if it's on page **A: 47, B: 25, C: 137, D: none of the above**, log on to our website and follow the competitions link to **dirtZone**. Then fill in the fields and fire off your entry. The competition closes on **January 10** with the first correct randomly drawn entry winning the gloves.

VIDEO OF THE MONTH!

Not just one video but a whole series brought to you by Red Bull KTM. 'Behind the Machine' is – as the name suggests – a behind the scenes series that follows KTM's efforts to take a premier motocross title in the good ol' US of A. Featuring clips and interviews with KTM riders' Marvin Musquin, Ryan Dungey and Ken Roczen it's a polished production that gets us geared up for the 2013 supercross season.



RADIO GA GA

Every Wednesday night from eight until 10 it's the Off-Road Show with Chris Warren Jnr on the UK's only online radio station worth listening to – check it out at www.bikerfm.co.uk.



SWEET TWEETS



@ArenacrossUK

We've got 666 followers – mwuhahahahahahaha! #devilishlygood #AXUK

@robwarner970

Having a mega day on the @husqvarnauk @dbrmagazine TC250 test bike

@MrBradNewton

Just bought new @dbrmagazine some sick stuff in it! #pumped

@dbrmagazine

In a hotel bar listening to @ChrisBirchFMX talking about #takemeout! WTF is going on!

@dbrmagazine

@jamiesquibb1 has just totally outdone @ChrisBirchFMX by talking about 15-minute meals with Jamie Oliver! Shoot me please!

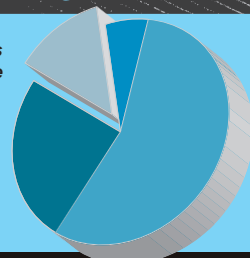
@ChrisBirchFMX

@dbrmagazine @jamiesquibb1 I don't recall this conversation? Oh wait haha yes I do

POLL OF THE MONTH!

Joe Nicholls wants to know who is the better rider?

- ☐ Ryan Villopoto
- ☐ Ken Roczen
- ☐ Ryan Dungey
- ☐ Dean Wilson





© Ray Archer

WIN! WIN! WIN!

FIVE PAIRS OF TICKETS FOR SHEFFIELD INDOOR TRIAL UP FOR GRABS...

The world's #1 Indoor Trial which is held every year at Sheffield's Motorpoint Arena is now confirmed as being the opening round of the 2013 FIM X-Trial World Championship. So, on Saturday **January 5** the very best riders in the world will descend on the Yorkshire city of steel to battle it out for championship points and to try and figure out who's best at not putting their feet down while riding over crazy obstacles on motorbikes without seats.

Riders confirmed so far include tremendous Toni Bou, amazing Adam Raga, astounding Albert Cabestany, throttle-happy Takahisa Fujinami, jumpin' Jeroni Fajardo and battling Brits James Dabill and Jack Challoner. They'll all be battling it out in an adrenaline-packed four hour show that's guaranteed to rock your socks!

To keep things affordable for the massive crowd who perennially pack out the arena promoter Neil Crosswaite has frozen ticket prices for the third year in a row! A comfy seat for a grown ups still costs just £32.50 while children under 14 can see all the action for £22.50. Tickets for Sheffield always sell reet fast so you

get yours now by calling the ticket hotline on **0114 256 5656** or by heading online to www.motorpointarena.co.uk.

If those tantalising ticket prices can't tease you into splashing some pre Christmas cash then how about trying to win a pair for you and a friend, family member or foe in our free to enter competition. All you have to do is answer an easy question and you could possibly win – or not. It's a game of chance! Anyhoo, what we want to know is this...

Who is the reigning X-Trial world champion?

Is it: **A:** Toni Bou
B: Tony Soprano
C: Tony Scarlett
D: Scarlett O'Hara

If you think you know the answer log on to www.dirtbikerider.com – and follow the competitions link in **dirtZone** or use your smartphone to scan this funky **QR code** which'll take you right there. The competition closes on **December 31** when the first five correct answers pulled at random out of our prize pigeon's pie hole will win the prizes. Pukka.



ALPINESTARS TECH3S YOUTH BOOT

Keep your youngsters' tootsies safe n' secure with these Tech 3S boots that are specifically designed and developed for young racers drawing on the technical heritage of Alpinestars' outstanding range of off-road footwear.

Price: £129.99
Supplier: alpinestars.com
Contact: CI Sport 01372 378000

SMUGGLING DUDS UNION JACK BOXER SHORTS

Normally we all hate getting underwear for Christmas but when it's Smuggling Duds pants you get to unwrap it's far from pants. Well, it is pants but the situation is not if you get what I'm saying? No? Ahhh, I give up. Maybe you'll get more useful info – including a look at the different designs and sizes available – from their website where you'll also find pricing info including awesome package deals. Good luck!

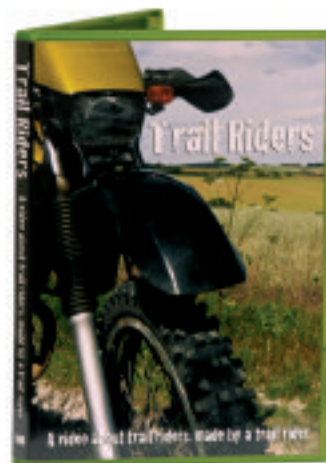
Price: see website
Supplier: smugglingduds.com
Contact: 0800 148 8231



ATLAS NECK BRACE

The peeps behind the Atlas Brace claim it's the next generation of extreme sports neck protection and provides the safety, mobility and comfort needed for MXers to do their thing safely out on the track. Used in anger by Jake Weimer and Tyler Villopoto in Bercy, the Atlas seems to be pretty popular with its pivoting supports and energy absorbing padding. Get more info online at atlasbrace.com.

Price: £249.99
Supplier: decade-europe.com
Contact: 01792 469811



TRAIL RIDERS DVD

If you've ever wondered what it's like to go trail riding then this DVD is for you as it passionately follows a group of intrepid trail enthusiasts as they respectfully ride some of the UK's most stunning green lanes. Shot by trail riders for trail riders this might not be as extreme as most DVD offerings but it's definitely an interesting watch...

Price: £15 inc P+P
Supplier: video-camerman.co.uk/trail-riders



FAMOUS STARS AND STRAPS TAKA HIGASHINO SIGNATURE TEE

The Famous Stars and Straps brand has delivered yet another banging signature tee to online legends www.freestylextreme.com and this time it's Taka Higashino's turn to get the start treatment. With it's awesome rising sun style print, this rad tee really stands out but if it's not your bag head online and have a look at the rest of the FSAS range cos there's something for all tastes...

Price: £24.99
Supplier: freestylextreme.com
Contact: 0117 304 9561

AIROH TERMINATOR HELMET

If you like promoting fizzy energy drinks and protecting your head then you should give Carly at Malcolm Rathmell Sport a yell because she has got just the thing for you. What I'm talking about is these rather stunning and oh-so protective Airoh Terminator helmets that come in both Rockstar and Monster Energy designs. Check 'em out at a dirt bike dealer right now...

Price: £365
Supplier: mrsld.co.uk
Contact: 01282 473190



LEATT 3DF PROTECTION

After specialising in neck protection for so long Leatt are now branching out to protect the rest of your body in their inimitable style. The 3DF range of body protection covers torso, elbows and knees and has been designed to offer unrivalled fit and awesome protection. The whole range is CE certified which basically means it's designed to do its dandiest to save you from injury. Like all Leatt products the materials used are the finest around. For more info on this stunning range hit up www.leatt-brace.com.

Price: various
Supplier: apico.co.uk
Contact: 01282 473190



ALPINESTARS A-8 PROTECTION VEST

Designed for use with Alpinestars' Bionic Neck Support the A-8 Protection Vest is a seriously hardcore bit of kit and offers high levels of protection from roost and rocks while offering exceptional freedom of movement. It's CE approved which is always a good sign too and is built to last like all Alpinestars swag.

Price: £149.99
Supplier: alpinestars.com
Contact: CI Sport 01372 378000



DRIFT HD GHOST ACTION CAMERA

We love a bit of Drift HD action cam action here at DBR Towers and that's why we can't wait to get our hands on this updated 1080P and 11 megapixel bad boy that totally makes filming and photographing yourself doing rad sh*t even easier than ever! So what's different about the Ghost? Well, there's a bigger screen for starters, the remote now lets you see when you've turned the camera on or off and then there's other improvements like built-in Wi-Fi, extended battery life and higher sound quality.

Price: £299
Supplier: actioncameras.co.uk
Contact: 0208 965 7679

KTM CASUAL CLOTHING

Coming at you straight outta Mattighofen this KTM hoodie is woven from a specially twisted yarn which ensures a high quality feel and colourful sheen. The hood is lined and has an additional loop for threading the drawstrings while all cuffs have inlaid rounded edging then there's the lux hood label and a kangaroo pouch pocket that really makes it a must-have for all fans of the orange brand.

The tee is something special too and you have to wonder if that's the 1980 KTM 125 MC or the '79 KTM 420 MC printed on the front? It's actually the eighth-litre missile with the 35mm Marzocchi forks, 89kg dry weight and 54mm bore – anyone can tell you that! The tee is white with a multicoloured front print, is 100 per cent cotton and has a woven label on waistband. It comes in adult sizes S to XXL.

Both these products – and more – are available from all authorized KTM dealers. To find your local dealer use the dealer locator tool on www.ktm.com.

Price: Borderfront hoodie £65.91
Off Road Toy tee £27.15
Supplier: ktm.co.uk
Contact: your local KTM dealer

THOR CASUAL CLOTHING

THOR are rad at racewear, we know that, you know that, RV knows that, everyone knows that but did you know they make a range of casual clobber to keep you warm in the winter too? Well you do now...

Price: Hoodies from £39.99
Hats from £14.99
Supplier: madison.co.uk
Contact: 0870 034 7226





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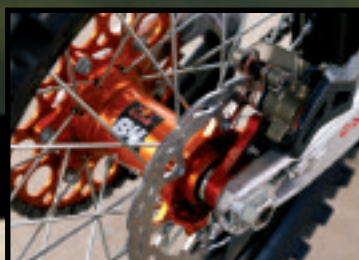




FANTASY FACTORY

IRN BRY MACKENZIE LIVES THE DREAM AND
TESTS A TRIO OF 2012 FACTORY KTMS – TWO OF
'EM WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP WINNERS...

Words by Bryan MacKenzie Photos by Ray Archer





SPECIFICATIONS

350 SX-F

Capacity: 349.7cc

Bore and stroke: 88x57.5mm

Performance: 58hp

Transmission: Five-speed

Front suspension: 52mm WP USD forks
(300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP shock
(330mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm Moto-Master disc
with Brembo hydraulic system

Rear brake: 220mm Moto-Master disc
with Brembo hydraulic system

Seat height: 992mm

Ground clearance: 371mm

Weight: 102kg

ANTASY CTORY





Bry fell in love with TC's bike



I'm about to live out a fantasy. It's not a rude one and it's not only mine. I say that because I think motocross fans all over the world would want to live out this fantasy (besides American ones because most of them can't see past their state line and the only Max, Tony and Jeffrey they know is Mad, Soprano and an illegal spliff of sorts). What I'm about to find out is how good those factory bikes are and in this case the factory bikes that dominated the 2012 world championship.

In a lot of cases in a lot of other sports the athletes are defined by their machinery. In car racing and on road bikes you can surround an average driver/rider with the best machinery and they can instantly gain great results and if you put an excellent driver/rider in the same position they get outstanding results.

The three riders whose bikes I'm about to test are each a testament to the weight that this theory may hold. Max Nagl came back from a very serious injury that kept him off a bike for months on end and slotted right back into the top three and even challenged TC222 on more than one occasion. Granted that Nagl's speed and ability has never been in question but would his comeback from such a serious back injury and long recovery have been as impressive on a different race bike?

Tony Cairoli is the boss! He absolutely killed it after the Sweden fiasco but let's not forget that before that he was nearly a whole GP in front in the points anyway. The guy is ridiculous and chicks get pregnant just from of his pure radness and he's undoubtedly one of the best riders the world has ever seen! But is he helped to stamp that authority so hard by the sheer quality of his machinery?

And then there's Jeffrey Herlings. No question the kid's a badass! One of the youngest champions ever and the fastest sand rider in the... just, ever! But how can he go so much faster in the sand? He barely gets out of shape and rides with so much confidence it borders illegal! Bike? Or is it all Jeffrey?

I race at the highest echelon of British motocross and even did a stint of MX1 GPs this season. Using a Scottish unit of measurement, I have been a 'baw-hair' away from the front of the field all season at home in the domestic MX2 races and the same goes for cracking the top 15 in the GPs I contested. So the way in which I'm going to analyse these bikes is ask the question 'are these bikes that good that they would have taken me from nearly man to an achiever of the goals that I fell so painfully short of?' Let's find out...

When I initially jumped on Herlings' bike on the way to the track entrance the first thing I noticed was that the kid likes his gear shifter set pretty high. Most will have theirs – myself included – in a pretty neutral and level position in relation to the footpeg but he seems to like his one notch higher which I can only assume is due to Jeffrey's hang-off-the-back style that he's adopted courtesy of all his sand riding experience. It will definitely make it easier for him to shift gears while he hangs out in the back quarter over the rear mudguard.

The other thing that was instantly obvious that differed to my personal preference was his choice in bar set up as he opts for a high and straight handlebar. Everyone has their own preference in bar bend just the same as people do with their coffee and it's just a case of each to their own to whatever suits their style.

Once on the track it only took a couple of straights and corners to unearth what I would consider as this bike's crowning jewel – its rev limiter, or lack thereof! It's absolutely unbelievable how far and freely this bike will rev without the restraint of a limiter and trust me it's only a good thing. It allowed me to hold gears longer so while all of the competition disengages the motor by way of feathering the clutch or chopping the throttle to select another gear this thing just motors on.

I found myself playing chicken with her on a few occasions to see who would intervene first – me or the limiter – and I have to admit that I lost on every occasion. Think of it like an elastic band, you're pulling the band tighter and tighter and wincing as you expect it to hit its maximum tolerance and eventually snap – that's a pretty good analogy of what it felt like. It revved and then kept revving and the pitch of the motor was so high that I was scared to take it further in case – like an elastic band – it would eventually snap. This characteristic though along with its instant response and zero bog really makes Herlings' 250 SX-F a premium starter.

On track the power was delivered smooth but strong off the bottom-end but at it's strongest in the mid-range it continued to produce power right up to and most likely beyond the point in the revs that I dared to take it whereas other bikes may have 'flat lined' by that stage.

It felt super light and nimble too and the real benefit of that came when entering turns and manoeuvring it in the air. I can see why the teenage phenom scrubs it so hard and tosses it about so easily as it is simply that – easy. This aspect also helps it turn – as the yanks would say 'on a dime'.

The brakes work so well as there isn't much in the way of weight behind it to make it hard work on the Brembo stoppers and so getting stopped for turns is easy! Unlike the bigger bikes the mass behind it is relatively low therefore if I missed the braking point or felt unsettled entering a turn for whatever reason, if I got a little firmer with the brakes, continued to commit to the turn and just tipped it in anyway I could make it work with a little extra brute force and ignorance.

In all honesty the suspension was a hard one to analyse as the track had been mostly prepared for us arriving. However there were a couple of sections left roughish and there were a lot of jumps to contend with – none of which caused any concern for the WP system that was bolted in and it was consistent and predictable on all the various take-offs and landings with no bottoming.

The couple of spots that were left rough were fast straights that had us braking into short, sharp uphill followed by Talladega type turns. The elements of the high speed approach and then hard braking combined with the natural squat of the bike as it went through the transition from the flat to uphill proved a pretty decent test. Although like I mentioned it was naturally squatting it never once bottomed causing any nasty kicks. It gave consistency lap after lap which ultimately breeds confidence.

Jeffrey Herlings' bike was a real treat to ride and in a quick sum up it was all about the lack of limiter and weight. You could hang on to gears forever on the thing and it felt as light as a 125 allowing you to literally place it wherever you wanted. Whether it be upside-down in mid air, attacking the biggest, gnarliest, roughest section on the track or puckering up my butt hole to try make in inside line if I just committed to it anyway I could just muscle it in making it easy to be consistent and that combined with the power characteristics would definitely bring out the best in any rider.

Max Nagl is another guy with a very different handlebar than what I'm accustomed to and from just looking at it on the stand I could see that his bars almost bend up making me think that he has them rolled pretty far forward in the clamps. I was right and the first couple of laps I took some time getting used to the 'cow horn' feel with handlebar. Initially I thought it made the front end feel strangely light on the track and difficult to steer but soon managed to adapt and overcome that but I never felt fully comfortable.

Nagl being a smaller dude I just assumed would go for the 'slammed' ride with cut sub-frames, plenty of sag and maybe even a low seat foam but I was surprised at how I never noticed any of that jazz and it actually felt pretty tall – maybe even the biggest bike on the day.

Once I had a few laps under my belt and settled in on the big girl I started stretching the cable and was blown away with its top-end speed and strong mid-range power. It wasn't a complete torque monster with a massive bottom-end power hit but just having 450cc stowed away was more than enough grunt in an instant. The mid-range however was ridiculous! Once I built up the courage to try ride fast I found it was putting that much power down on the exit of turns that I was forced to drag and feather the clutch to keep the front end down making me feel like I was putting out an aggressive body language look.

After each time I had just tamed the powerhouse and regained composure I was



quickly in to the limiter and throwing another gear at it – third. Unlike the 2013 production 450 SX-Fs which only has four gears the factory KTM has a five-speed box and I found myself using mostly second and third gears and maybe only hooking fourth just once per lap. Although if I wasn't feeling very Olympic on a particular day I think I could have got away with using only third for an entire lap as it was strong enough to pull out of the slower turns with the need for only a little light clutching and I could of just screwed it on and bounced the valves for a couple of seconds if I wanted to avoid touching fourth.

But I was using second gear mostly for braking surprisingly.

With this being the heaviest of the three bikes the brakes naturally felt the weakest due to

the effort it is to stop man and machine at the sheer velocity of which you amass and a couple of times I wasn't quick enough to judge my speed and missed my early braking point and subsequently my desired line. So to assist the Brembos and myself out a little I was dropping it down that extra gear into the turns to add a bit of engine braking and increase my control which settled me down and allowed me to consistently hit my lines after that. So funnily enough I was using the low gear more for the approach of the turns than the exit.

In the air I could feel the weight underneath me and tentatively laid it over on some of the bigger hits for fear of not getting it back. Don't get me wrong this isn't a heavy bike by 450 standards but I guess I was thinking that maybe



SPECIFICATIONS

450 SX-F

Capacity: 449.4cc

Bore and stroke: 95x63.4mm

Performance: 63hp

Transmission: Five-speed

Front suspension: 52mm WP USD forks
(300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP shock
(330mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm Moto-Master disc
with Brembo hydraulic system

Rear brake: 220mm Moto-Master disc
with Brembo hydraulic system

Seat height: 992mm

Ground clearance: 371mm

Weight: 104kg

Nag's bike feels closer to the stocker than the others

a weight advantage might have been this bike's greatest characteristic because after all how much faster do you want a bike to be?

The suspension was a touch too hard for me on the rolling bumps dropping down a couple of the hills and I had to be up out of the seat sharpish to avoid any harsh rebounding which would result in a loss of forward drive. Flat landing or jumping into the brakes was a zero stress affair as the big fo' fiddy absorbed them like a complete champ.

So in comparison to the production 450 I was riding late this season there wasn't a massive difference between the two particularly in the chassis which left me a little disappointed. I didn't notice any difference in weight and only very marginally in the power which was improved

but not too far ahead of an off-the-shelf bike. Don't get me wrong I'm sure the factory bike of Nag's is definitely a special bike but out of the three on the test this one was the one that closest resembled a production model in terms of power and feel. But that could be a good thing, no? It might just mean that the new production 450 is the closest thing to a factory bike yet...

Tony Cairoli's 350 was the one I was looking forward to the most! I had so many questions that I couldn't wait to get answers for. Now I'm not lying when I say this but as soon as I sat on the #222 I instantly thought this is ideal. It was the smallest out of all of the bikes instantly giving me confidence that I could 'man-handle' and bitch it about. Everything up front felt

comfortable and where it should be. I'm pretty sure it would be exactly how I would set my bike up.

I took to the track in anticipation and within corners I was already shredding the 'gnar' after needing no time to adapt. It was an instantly comfortable ride and with my first load of air I 'tossed a little phatty' (that means I done a little whip – easy Jim) and landed with the binders on to make a tight inside line and so quickly made my mind up that it felt way more like a 250 than a 450.

I could confidently move it about in the air for the rest of my allotted time, dragging it out a few extra feet if need be when I was coming up a little short on something and whipping it easily without fear of it not coming back. >>



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SPECIFICATIONS

250 SX-F

Capacity: 249.9cc

Bore and stroke: 78x52.3mm

Performance: 45hp

Transmission: Five-speed

Front suspension: 52mm WP USD forks (300mm travel)

Rear suspension: WP shock (330mm travel)

Front brake: 260mm Moto-Master disc with Brembo hydraulic system

Rear brake: 220mm Moto-Master disc with Brembo hydraulic system

Seat height: 992mm

Ground clearance: 371mm

Weight: 98kg



Equally as easy to stop as Herlings' I was surprised to find it actually then turned a little easier. That may relate back to the low/small feeling of the chassis, his sweet bar bend or maybe it is just a combination of it all and it's literally just easier...

Regardless, I wasn't bothered and started pushing it more and more. By now there were more braking bumps forming and the faster you hit them the better the suspension worked. If I attacked them with speed the suspension would almost get on top of braking bumps like a section of whoops with the front and back wheel tapping the top of each bump on the way through giving it a very confident and consistent feel as opposed to dropping to the bottom of the holes and rebounding too fast, missing a couple and unsettling my balance.

Again this just injected confidence in me and I even found myself pushing it a wee bit too hard

for the circumstances and had to remind myself of why I was there – also I wasn't completely sure where KTM stand on the standard bike borrowing rule of 'you bend it you mend it' because I'm sure it wouldn't of been a cheap accident had there been one.

The motor is so impressive too sharing the same smooth but strong power off the bottom that seemed to be consistent with all of the bikes. The 350 puts just as much power to the ground as you would expect – somewhere in between a 250 and a 450 but I kinda liked it! It was stronger than the smaller capacity bike but was more manageable than the bigger by not requiring any clutching or aggressive body language to keep the front end down – just point and shoot!

The most impressive thing about this bike though is how it shares a little element of something from each of its siblings. The rev

range is like a 250F, in fact it probably revs as high as my own MX2 bike did this season and the strength in mid-range power and top-end speed is scarily close to the 450 making it super easy to get to speed with the least amount of effort possible. That would answer all the questions to how TC222 gets good starts on a bike that's minus 100cc – the fact that it puts the power to the ground well without lifting the front end means he can hang on to a gear while the rest of the guys will be shifting.

In a nutshell I'd have to say that Tony Cairoli's bike was the most impressive. It's clear that although he is an absolute badass, if his bike was a football sticker it would be a shiny! It's so easy and comfortable to ride, everything is positioned where it should be, it does what it should be doing and puts manageable power to the ground with the least amount of effort. Ultimately it makes going fast easy.

AGONY AND X-TASY!

ONE OF THE TOUGHEST TITLES TO WIN IN FREESTYLE MOTOCROSS IS ALSO ONE OF THE MOST LUCRATIVE WHICH IS WHY THE X-FIGHTERS ARE WILLING TO PUT THEIR LIVES ON THE LINE AS THEY ATTEMPT TO GRAB THAT ELUSIVE GOLD...

WORDS BY **ROB WARNER** PHOTOS BY **REDBULLCONTENTPOOL.COM**

I first got asked to work on the Red Bull X-Fighters Freestyle Motocross World Tour six years ago and despite still having a deal to race mountain bikes professionally at that time I decided it would be fine to miss most of my race season to have a go at a bit of TV presenting instead. A good decision it was too. I was more than a little bit past my 'best by' date and Giant finally hung up their cheque book at the end of the year leaving me to pursue the second career I'd been lucky enough to stumble into in life. Thankfully this one was no less exciting.

So in 2007 I started 'working' on the X-Fighters which has since taken me to some of the most incredible locations around the world and has given me the privileged position of watching the very best freestyle motocross riders the world has to offer risking all in what has to be the most dangerous two-wheeled discipline on the planet. Even now there's nothing like the tingle I get when I hear the sound of a leaned-up 250 two-stroke hitting the face of a ramp and looking expectedly skyward to see which insane move the lunatic onboard – or very often not – is going to throw down.

Since I've worked on the tour the one thing that really stands out and keeps FMX fresh is the progression. Every year I stand there at the end of it all thinking well that's that – where can it possibly go now? Nearly every right

side up trick's been done upside down so what's left? And every year it just keeps getting bigger, more dangerous and more ludicrous – if that's even possible.

ROUND ONE – DUBAI

In the middle of April it was time to hop on a jet to Dubai. It's always a bummer to have to leave the UK at that time of year but I managed to force myself since this was going to be the first of six stops in this year's series and was also being held on the glamorous Jumeirah Beach. As always at the start of the season the pits are buzzing with the talk of new tricks, who's got what, who's spent the most time in the foam pit over the winter and of course – in this sport more than any other – who's uninjured.

The winner in Dubai the year before and the overall 2011 tour champion Danny Torres was really struggling with a foot injury that he'd recently had surgery on – it had been fused left to right – and the agony he was in was written all over his little Spanish face every time he came off the course.

Loveable rogue Blake 'Bilko' Williams was the first to try the 120 foot ramp – and the last. The Australian came up short and didn't crash but the impact was heavy enough that his ankle from that point onwards would be so wrecked it would rule him out of contention all season long. The ramps these guys use vary between Europe, the States and everywhere in-between

and Bilko put it down to just that – the ramp was a little 'poppy' and in a heartbeat a winter's preparation went out the window.

On a positive note it was amazing to see the tall debonair Norwegian Andre Villa back from his huge crash in Poland the year previous. He'd underrotated a flip on the second half of a huge four-pack in one of the worst crashes I'd ever seen. As he disappeared behind the huge landing of dirt – still upside down with his foot caught on his gear lever and the bike above him about to pile-drive him into the ground – I actually felt sick. A feeling compounded by the fact that the only thing that broke the impounding silence was his girlfriend's screams as she ran down out of the stands to get to him. His femur was bust in that crash but here he was, rod in thigh, with months of rehab behind him laying down an almost perfect qualifier. The relief that he could still ride at this level was clear because as he finished he was inconsolable – collapsing on his bars as he waited for his score. There wasn't a dry eye in the house and it wasn't just because there was sand swirling through the air.

One of the things I remember thinking while hanging around in the pits before the event was just how buggered half the field looked despite the season not having actually started. It was like they'd all come back from WW1 >>



with trench foot. Bilko, Villa and Torres could hardly walk, Matt Rebeaud – the Swiss magician who has dominated this sport – had a limp so bad from a bust femur that Monty Python would have been proud while Josh Sheehan the double-flip genius was back but taking it easy after shoulder surgery. That's how gnarly this sport is though – it makes sky diving without a parachute look safe!

As the event started one of the biggest questions I had in my head was whether or not the live MC – my mate Tim Warwood – would get his introduction to his 'Royal Highness the Prince Akabuck Dimitri Kloboshnosh' or something like that wrong again. He'd narrowly escaped with his melon a year previous. Luckily it was close enough and Tim watched on as Levi Sherwood took the win with a clinical performance coupled with the biggest extensions in the book.

The young New Zealander burst on the scene in 2009 with a debut X-fighters win and the biggest Kiss of Death flip the world had ever seen. But two years of horrific and at times life threatening crashes had seen his youthful exuberance tempered giving him a more consistent and less flamboyant style – he simply wanted to be around all season. The hugely likeable Robbie Adelberg – another antipodean – came in second while Chilean Javier Villegas stole third.

ROUND TWO – USA

A month later and it was across the Atlantic to the amazing Glen Helen Raceway and the biggest FMX course the world had ever seen – it was basically America's answer to the Great Wall of China. The huge course separated the men from the boys with more dirt take-offs than ramps, a step-up/down the likes of which had never before been seen, a wall-ride that was five storeys high and a quarter-pipe that could literally put you into orbit. Then there were the five gallon sodas and loads of amazing – I mean weird looking – fake racks everywhere you looked. The whole event was on another scale. To make things even better the adjacent motocross track was full of California's finest getting ready for the outdoor series and I was running between the two so much it looked like I was playing tennis by myself.

California is where the freestyle movement began and I like to think McGrath started it all out in the desert with the Nac Nacs and Superman he threw while filming TerraFirma 2. This course was a very valid throwback to that with as much freeride as freestyle – it was truly incredible. Full credit to Red Bull for having the foresight for allowing the sport to go forwards in such a way – stuff like this is why X-Fighters is leagues ahead of any other FMX series and shows they're literally urging the sport along.

First practice was wild – like a game of chess but without the thinking. Adelberg was the first to flip up the 60 foot step-up – breaking his jaw in the process – followed quickly after by the rumbling 450 Hondas of Cali FMX legend Todd Potter and new boy Wes Agee who were both reveling in the big course. Torres looked out of sorts as the agony of his foot injury and not being competitive saw the Spaniard in tears after qualifying.

Round one winner Sherwood also didn't look good and wouldn't go anywhere near the step-up even right-side-up, the new Levi deciding if he wasn't comfortable he wouldn't take any risks – a decision you have to respect after what he's been through.

It was also the last time we'd see Andre Villa in 2012 as he fired his YZ250 out the top of the quarter-pipe only to fall down the gap at the back – nearly losing a finger in the process. Ouch!

For me this is where the series really started and for just one reason – the return to competition of Thomas Pages. The Frenchman has been away from the sport for two years following the crash by his brother at the Bercy SX demo where he was trying the front flip. Charlie is still recovering and with them being so close it understandably affected Thomas to the point where he won't go upside down anymore. It's a longer story than I have space for here but it killed FMX for him to the point where he needed to see a psychologist to help him through it. To enjoy his riding again he needed to do something different and be an individual. In my eyes the result is breathtaking – Pages is an innovator and without a doubt one of the most radical dudes ever to hang off the side of a YZ250.

Main event day came and the tattooed, silicon-pumped, Budweiser drinking, USA chanting stereotypical partisan crowd was fired up and ready for the main event. Sherwood and Torres both were gone by the quarter-finals and for me it was all about three riders – Potter, Agee and the invigorating wildcard Pages.

Potter looked at home on the big course flipping the 120 dirt tabletop as well as the step-up but Metal Mulisha team-mate Wes Agee looked even better – incredibly forceful and given he holds the world record for a distance backflip of 240 feet ("do it in fourth gear and don't pull too hard," he told me if you fancy a go) even more comfortable out there.

Pages was giving the smoker everything to get over the huge 120 foot transfer line while throwing out a wild double Nac or his ace card the body varial – a trick where he does a 360 above the bike which is incredibly difficult and incredibly dangerous, so much so that no-one else on the tour this year will even attempt it. Agee suffered a rare mechanical with a flip lever getting tangled with the front brake hose so it was to be a Euro/USA final – Potter versus Pages.

Potter went first and didn't go for the huge step-up flip so it was the unpredictable Pages' chance to make history by taking the first right-side-up X-Fighters win since the backflip was first landed by Carey Hart back in the 2000 – but he'd definitely need the varial. It didn't happen though, perhaps because the wind had picked up just enough to throw both Pages and Potter. The American deservedly took the win and Pages had come perhaps further than he thought possible without going upside down and his fire was relit.

ROUND THREE – TURKEY

Come the middle of June and it was Turkey's turn to host an X-Fighters for the first time. Originally planned to be inside the walls of the ancient Yedikule Dungeons it was rumoured – and this is just a rumour – that Robbie Madison crashed and damaged the ruins whilst filming the new Bond movie which wasn't to the liking of the Turkish authorities who demanded the event be moved to the nearby Kazlıcesme Square. Maddo's well hard but could he ruin a ruin? Whatever the reason the decision would have deeper consequences than anyone could have foreseen as insanely strong winds would see the event cancelled. Nice weather for flying kites not motorbikes. Luckily the hotel pool was pretty sheltered.

ROUND FOUR – SPAIN

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Jackson Strong brought a front flip to the final round





Cameron Sinclair's flair has to be seen to be believed – and here it is!



x-fighters

Japan's Eigo Sato flies high above Dubai...



Torres was on it all year



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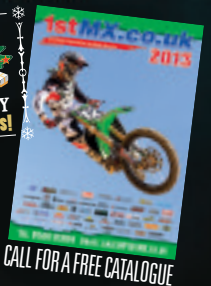
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deafening and the fact that the fans don't see the riders until they leave the top of the ramp and fly from one side of the small arena to the other is breathtaking. Even David Beckham was there watching one year but despite being loved by the Spanish he didn't get into the royal box – well not that's been made public.

This is Danny Torres house and the little amigo has already had two emphatic wins in front of his adoring fans. As always Torres looked like he'd come back to form just at the right time, throwing down trick combination back flips which are big points scorers with the judges. But it wouldn't be easy for him even with the home crowd booing anyone he was going up against. It's like being at a theatre where they encourage the use of chainsaws – not that I've ever been to the theatre I hasten to add.

Pages had come back from X Games with a new trick – the special flip where he – not the bike – does a backflip before hoping as he comes around that the seat and bars are there for him so he can pull himself back onboard.

Sherwood would be back on the familiar ramp set up he loves and after a disaster in California he knew his throwaway round was used and he needed to perform if he wanted a shot at the million dollar overall prize fund.

The bullring is unique in that riders get to do their biggest eight or nine tricks in their 90 second run. There's nowhere to hide and nowhere to be creative on the course – ultimately it's a ramp and a landing and I think that's why we saw Pages go out in the semis despite pulling two tricks worthy of winning any 'best trick' comp on the planet. Without any backflips the 'variation' category from the judges would never go his way here and it cost him.

But the final was to be breathtaking, the two greatest bullring exponents head-to-head – Torres and Sherwood both riding at their best. Both pulling insane combos, Danny with the stalefish to saran wrap and Sherwood with the dead body to super flip combo – too close to call, this one was down to the judges. This time it went Sherwood's way giving him a commanding lead in the overall points going into the penultimate round in Munich's spaceship style Olympic stadium.

ROUND FIVE – GERMANY

The course in Germany was big, wide-open and had a small quarter-pipe very specifically placed into the face of a take off. After his X-Games disappointment – and then in my opinion not being marked highly enough in Madrid – the

judges' nightmare Thomas Pages came fully prepared for battle packing both the varial, the special flip and now for the first time off his own personal quarter-pipe – the flair. The big question was could loose cannon Pages keep his head together and pull three of the hardest tricks on the planet three times each through the quarters, semi and final.

Torres was clearly finally over his glass foot and inspired from Madrid was looking back to his technical, clinical best pulling shapes Paul Daniels could only dream of bending Debbie McGee in.

Sherwood was hurting from a crash leading up to the event and suffering going out in the quarters so this time it would be Pages turn to face Torres in the final. After two flawless runs could he deliver one more time or under pressure would he turn into an old woman's hip and crumble?

Torres went first and laid down an immaculate run for everyone to see including Pages who started his run with the special flip over the 80 footer. Then came the flair, sketchy as ever but he got back on, the biggest whip in the history of motorbike riding followed leaving only the 540 for what had to be the win. Time was running out and Pages was a mile from the kicker and realizing it he pinned the Yamaha around the outside of the arena to get there with literally seconds to spare – so little time in fact that instead of stopping momentarily and composing himself he just went and pulled it with just a big leg protruding down into the dirt on landing.

It hadn't been perfect but it was close. Could Pages make history? It was in the laps of the judges whose job I don't envy one bit. I held my breath and crossed my fingers and legs – it's a nightmare trying to nip off for a pee during one of these things. He'd done it! Finally it all came together for Thomas Pages and the world of FMX had been stood on its head without being stood on its head.

ROUND SIX – AUSTRALIA

Going into the finals at the start of October Pages and Sherwood were level on points and it would all come down to the last event of the year on Cockatoo Island under the shadow of Sydney Harbour Bridge. Riding alongside them though would be the very best the sport has to offer in what would be the greatest field of FMX riders ever assembled.

One of the first big hitters to hit the course would be last year's winner Josh Sheehan who was still recovering from surgery to fix a >>

Kiwi Levi Sherwood takes the title in amazing style



Eigo Sato



Dany Torres



Todd Potter



Thomas Pages



Levi Sherwood

RED BULL X-FIGHTERS 2012 FINAL SERIES STANDINGS...

1	Levi Sherwood	KTM	335
2	Thomas Pages	Yamaha	315
3	Dany Torres	KTM	215
4	Javier Villegas	Yamaha	190
5	Eigo Sato	Yamaha	190
6	Todd Potter	Honda	155



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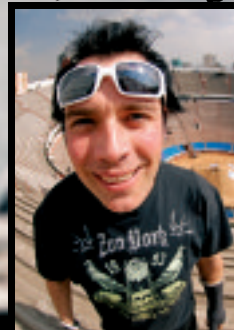
M O T O R C Y C L E C H A I N



Rob Adelberg flips the Glen Helen step up



Thomas Pages keeps things right side up



WHO IS ROB WARNER?

If you ain't got a clue who Rob Warner is then don't sweat it because I can guarantee he actually really doesn't give a sh*t! Affectionately known as 'Caveman' throughout his downhill mountain bike career, the Giant factory racer won a world cup round in Austria and three British titles n'all but was probably better known for breaking bones, hearts and hymens as he raced, humped and partied his was around the globe.

Since retiring from bicycle racing Rob's concentrated on being a sports commentator and is the only DBR contributor who has ever featured on Rude Tube as his OTT description of Danny Hart's awesome ride to the WC – that's world championship and not the toilet – made the show last winter. While that was a one-off you can see a lot more of Rob on Dave TV's coverage of the X-Fighters which he hosts alongside Ed Leigh. Oh, and he's also finished well at the Tough One once or twice – even in the dark without any lights.



broken neck. Just 12 months before on this very island he'd blown everyone away by – after very nearly crashing big style – turning the big 450 round and tickling his way up to the super kicker before letting it have it and pulling a double back flip which really had to be seen to be believed. To help the rotation the 450 usually ends up on the rev-limiter adding to the sense that you're about to see something go very, very wrong.

This year he played it down saying it probably wouldn't happen – well at least until your 30 seconds into your run with a home crowd going insane. He pulled it again, the commitment to a trick like that unimaginable as are the consequences if it doesn't come round.

Someone who knows that feeling is yet another Aussie FMX living legend Cam Sinclair who was very nearly killed pulling that trick in Madrid a few years back – not that he hasn't pulled it since having the greatest comeback since Easter Sunday by taking an X-Games gold before returning to X-Fighters and landing it one more time. A two-week-old baby daughter would hopefully make him see sense and it did – Sincs safely throwing down the brand new 540 leaving the double flip for the mentally unstable.

Best trick competition specialist Jackson Strong made history landing the first ever front flip in a competition run on the island. I've seen a few attempted over the years but never one landed, I mean think about what he's actually doing. A backflip at least has some flow to it in the way you leave the ramp but the front flip is like trying to push custard uphill with a fork – every thing is going against you.

Jackson went for it off the super kicker, his whole body hanging over the front mudguard and 70 feet later he was down on his wheels! Shame the jump was only 50 feet as he over cleared it by 20 flat landing and as he did the crowd went wild and my head exploded.

The quarters and semis came and went and here we were at a final that couldn't have been scripted better – it was Pages versus Sherwood for the most prestigious title in FMX.

Sherwood was brilliant – a new found consistency this year that has made him the complete package and of course those extensions. No one can touch the flexibility the 'rubber kid' has and as a result so many of his tricks are the definitive version the other riders try to emulate – without removing their spines

they're gonna struggle.

Pages was up against it and he knew it. A slight side wind was blowing the bike from under him on the varials and although he'd pulled it twice before the big question was could he manage it one more time in this final? His new tricks he'd been working tirelessly in the foam pit for weren't ready so despite throwing out the perfect 360 he needed it but it wasn't to be, a hesitation like the one we saw in the final in Glen Helen and it was all over leaving Levi Sherwood the tour champion for the first time but if he can stay healthy not the last.

So that was it – a final that was more like a 'best trick' competition. We'd seen it all, the biggest tricks on the planet all played out in what has to be the greatest FMX event ever. In Dubai six months previous I really wondered what we were going to see this year and how possibly the sport could continue to progress from where we were because they were already doing the impossible. I didn't need to worry, the courses and head-to-head competition format of Red Bull X-Fighters means the riders have to push the boundaries and that FMX has a stage worthy of it. Roll on 2013!

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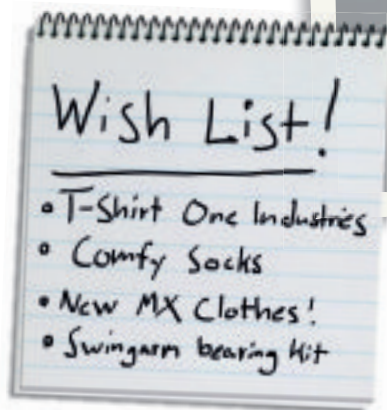
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LAST MAN STANDING!

THE MONSTER ENERGY/AMA SUPERCROSS SERIES IS BOUND TO BE A BRUISING BATTLE BUT WHO'S GONNA MAKE IT TO THE END IN ONE PIECE AND COME OUT ON TOP?

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY STEVE COX



Each and every January the attention of the entire motocross world is drawn to California like The Bear to money as the AMA Supercross series fires into life at Anaheim's Angel Stadium. And 2013 will be no different as come the fifth evening of the New Year the Monster Energy/AMA Supercross series will start with a bang before running relentlessly right through until May 4 – you can guarantee that for those 18 weeks we'll all be glued to the internet desperate to know what's going down...

Like it has been for the past few years the premier – and freshly renamed 450SX™ – class is packed with talent. Realistically there are four riders in with a real chance of stealing the crown and another handful capable of winning on any given weekend. While defending champ Ryan Villopoto has to start as favourite to win his third title on the trot would you really count out Ryan Dungey, James Stewart or Chad Reed? And what about two-time Lites champ Justin Barcia who's now full-time in the big boy division?

With so many races in such a short amount of time the Supercross series can seem like a championship decided by attrition. It's not that supercross is more dangerous but one injury often leads to another because racers have no opportunity to heal up during this whirlwind tour. With that in mind – as well as the high level of competition – you can guarantee that whoever wins this series definitely deserves it. Here's a little bit about the leading contenders...

MONSTER ENERGY KAWASAKI

RYAN VILLOPOTO #1

JAKE WEIMER #12

The first repeat 450cc Supercross champ since Ricky Carmichael in 2005/06, Ryan Villopoto is the man right now. Long known as an outdoor specialist he's at least as good indoors nowadays – which is why he's won two consecutive AMA Supercross titles. He was knocked out of the 2012 racing season with a knee injury in Seattle after he'd already clinched the Supercross title which kept him from defending his 2011 450cc outdoor title as well. But he's back up to speed and putting in work for Anaheim 1 helped yet again by his team-mate Jake Weimer. Weimer himself is a former Lites SX champ and multi-time 450cc podium finisher who trains alongside Villopoto with Aldon Baker. Weimer is expecting to win his first 450cc main this year and maybe even make his own run for the title. This team, simply put, is a powerhouse.

RED BULL KTM

RYAN DUNGEY #5

There were a lot of questions about the signing of Ryan Dungey to the Red Bull KTM squad in 2012 because although he's always a legitimate championship contender but KTM has always struggled in the 450cc class Stateside. He answered at round two in 2012 landing KTM its first 450cc SX win. He went on to dominate the 2012 outdoor title chase as well although he was helped a bit by the lack of competition since Villopoto, Reed, Stewart, and Canard all spent much of the championship on the sidelines. Still, he's coming into 2013 with a year on the new bike and he's hungry.

TWOTWO MOTORSPORTS HONDA

CHAD REED #22

Chad Reed's TwoTwo Motorsports team enters 2013 still with full-factory Honda support. His title sponsor has yet to be determined although Reed did add Monster Energy as a personal sponsor for 2013. Reed was hoping to have a title sponsor announced and ready in time to snatch up another top racer to join him on his team but he has been frustrated trying to get the money together to support more than just him. However, he's been more than enough for his team up to this point and prior to his major crash and injury he was giving eventual champ Ryan Villopoto all he could handle in 2012 so you can bet he'll be a contender yet again.

TEAM HONDA MUSCLE MILK

TREY CANARD #41

JUSTIN BARCIA #51

Trey Canard has been on the factory Honda squad for two seasons prior to this year although he hasn't raced all that much for the team. He won three supercross races in his first season in 2011 before he broke his femur and then re-broke it during the Nationals that same year. He came back at Phoenix for round two in 2012 but his return only lasted one race before he was put out for the season with a horrific crash at the start of the Los Angeles SX main event. He's back riding and feeling good.

Canard will be joined by wild child Justin Barcia this year. Both racers are graduates of the GEICO Honda feeder program, having both raced for the GEICO team as amateurs then moved through the 250cc pro ranks pulling down multiple titles. Now, they make up the entire factory Honda 450cc squad. It's a tribute to the system the GEICO Honda team has in place as well as the individual efforts of these two racers. Barcia has already won a main event on his 450 at the Monster Energy Cup so he should be a contender.

Team manager Erik Kehoe hasn't been around lately and it's hard to get a feel for what's going on but there's some sort of a contract conflict between Honda and him. Team members have only said they hope it gets resolved sooner rather than later.

ROCKSTAR ENERGY SUZUKI

DAVI MILLSAPS #18

Stewart's former JGR Yamaha team-mate from 2012 joins him on Suzuki's in 2013 as Davi Millsaps – who made his start with Suzuki in the pro ranks in 2004 – returns to Suzuki to race 450s for the Rockstar Energy Suzuki team. Reports from the test tracks are that he is flying on his new mount.

TOYOTA/JGR YAMAHA

JUSTIN BRAYTON #10

JOSH GRANT #33

Back in 2010 this was the Toyota/JGR Yamaha line-up. In 2011, Josh Grant (who recorded the JGR squad's first-ever 450cc SX win back in 2009) left the team to race for Team Honda which lasted a couple of races until he was hurt and out for the season. Grant raced in 2012 for the now-defunct Jeff Ward Racing team but is returning to JGR for 2013.

Alongside him is another racer who left for Team Honda – Justin Brayton. Brayton has learned that the grass isn't always greener on the other side of the fence and returns to JGR in 2013. Both racers have it in them to contend for wins and podiums. It's a solid, mature team as the JGR squad works to recover from its 2012 James Stewart experiment.

YOSHIMURA SUZUKI

JAMES STEWART #7

Yoshimura Suzuki is all-in on James Stewart. There are no other racers on the team. Stewart showed what he could do early in the AMA Nationals, winning the first four motos before crashing out of the opening moto at round three. Stewart likes the RM-Z450 a lot and there's a reason he either wins or crashes – because he won't accept anything less than a win. With this attitude, the season will likely go one of two ways – either he will win a lot or he will crash a lot. The field is simply too deep for even Stewart to crash and still win. He's still the fastest guy on the track in one lap but the question now is whether he can consistently put 20 of those laps together.



Barcia could be a contender if he can keep it on two wheels



Justin Brayton's back at JGR

Having not won a title since 2009 James Stewart needs to make this year count

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ROLL OF HONOUR!

SUPERCROSS CHAMPS THRU TIME...

2012	Ryan Villopoto	Kawasaki
2011	Ryan Villopoto	Kawasaki
2010	Ryan Dungey	Suzuki
2009	James Stewart	Yamaha
2008	Chad Reed	Yamaha
2007	James Stewart	Kawasaki
2006	Ricky Carmichael	Suzuki
2005	Ricky Carmichael	Suzuki
2004	Chad Reed	Yamaha
2003	Ricky Carmichael	Honda
2002	Ricky Carmichael	Honda
2001	Ricky Carmichael	Kawasaki
2000	Jeremy McGrath	Yamaha
1999	Jeremy McGrath	Yamaha
1998	Jeremy McGrath	Yamaha
1997	Jeff Emig	Kawasaki
1996	Jeremy McGrath	Honda
1995	Jeremy McGrath	Honda
1994	Jeremy McGrath	Honda
1993	Jeremy McGrath	Honda
1992	Jeff Stanton	Honda
1991	Jean-Michel Bayle	Honda
1990	Jeff Stanton	Honda
1989	Jeff Stanton	Honda
1988	Rick Johnson	Honda
1987	Jeff Ward	Kawasaki
1986	Rick Johnson	Honda
1985	Jeff Ward	Kawasaki
1984	Johnny O'Mara	Honda
1983	David Bailey	Honda
1982	Donnie Hansen	Honda
1981	Mark Barnett	Suzuki
1980	Mike Bell	Yamaha
1979	Bob Hannah	Yamaha
1978	Bob Hannah	Yamaha
1977	Bob Hannah	Yamaha
1976	Jim Weinert	Kawasaki
1975	Steve Stackable	(500cc) Maico
1975	Jim Ellis	(250cc) Can-Am
1974	Gary Semics	(500cc) Husqvarna
1974	Pierre Karsmakers	(250cc) Yamaha

ama sx fan guide



Can RV take SX title #3?

K-Dub's a fan favourite but can he still challenge for a podium?



Andrew Short is Chaparral Honda's big hope in SX!

CHAPARRAL HONDA

ANDREW SHORT #29

The Chaparral Honda team – co-owned by Larry Brooks and Jeremy McGrath – started up in 2012 with a sponsorship from a media website. That sponsorship ended part way through the supercross series with rumours saying the sponsor wasn't paying its bills. But the Brooks/McGrath team looked to a familiar face to take over sponsorship for the rest of the year in Chaparral – the same title sponsor they had on their Yamaha team at the turn of the millennium. The team is scheduled to continue forward for 2013 with Chaparral and will still be getting factory Honda support for Short.

GEICO HONDA

KEVIN WINDHAM #14

The GEICO Honda team – owned and run by Factory Connection Racing – is mostly a 250 team but will be running the sport's most veteran racer in Kevin Windham through 2014, in the 450 class. Windham's unlikely to challenge for a win but remains a fan favourite thanks to his opening show transfers.



ALL-TIME TOP 10!

SUPERCROSS' MOST SUCCESSFUL RACERS...

1	Jeremy McGrath	72 wins
2	Ricky Carmichael	48
3	James Stewart	44
4	Chad Reed	41
5	Ricky Johnson	28
6	Bob Hannah	27
7	Ryan Villopoto	24
8	Damon Dradshaw	19
9	Kevin Windham	18
10	Mark Barnett	17

Matt Goerke switches to a BTO KTM for 2013

Since leaving Roger Hargreaves behind Mr Tickle has gone from strength to strength

Mike Alessi's good starts make him easy to spot on the track

MOTOCONCEPTS SUZUKI

MIKE ALESSI #800

This team is really Team Alessi. Tony Alessi makes a lot of the calls on the team, including the decision in 2012 to put Mike Alessi on a Suzuki RM-Z450 and put the Lites racers on Hondas. Alessi will still be on Suzukis and will continue to get good starts – that's half the battle.

TILUBE/TIFUEL/FOREMOST INSURANCE KAWASAKI

NICK WEY #27

Nick Wey is a popular racer with the fans with personality for days and he tends to put himself in the main event week after week. He's rarely a real contender for podiums or top-fives but he's always in the mix. That shouldn't change this year. What he lacks in raw speed he makes up for in personality and veteran wiles.

BTO SPORTS KTM

MICHAEL BYRNE #26

MATT GOERKE #62

Michael Byrne almost had moto one at Unadilla won, he led the first three quarters of the race and had a massive lead when he caught his leg in a rut and broke his fibula. Despite his age Byrne is still very fast on occasion and his team is switching to the now-proven KTM 450 SX-F. Goerke is a former National winner and Florida boy joining the Florida-based team for 2013 as well. They may surprise some people.

DODGE/SYCUAN CASINO/RCH SUZUKI

BROC TICKLE #25

JOSH HILL #75

Ricky Carmichael has come on board for 2013 to Carey Hart's race team. The former Hart and Huntington squad is now called the RCH squad – for Ricky Carmichael and Hart – and they have signed some talented racers for 2013. Josh Hill is returning to the team and although he has taken a long time to get back going after his huge injury from a few years ago everyone knows he has the potential to win races. In fact, he has already done that in the 450cc class. And Broc Tickle is heading into his second 450cc season coming off of a season racing for the Pro Circuit team. He knows what to expect now so don't be surprised to see him mixing it up near the front.



Ken Roczen's aiming for a 250SX title



Seely and Deano will pick up where they left off last season

YOUNG GUNS!

WHO'S PACKING HEAT IN THE SMALL-BORE DIVISION...

Although the 250SX™ class is considered to be the second tier championship the racing action is always top-notch. Split into two divisions – East n' West – the championships comprise of nine rounds each and the big East/West shootout in Vegas. Geographical location has nothing to do with which coast riders have to race and since it's purely down to choice many decide last minute. While certain teams will only ever do one championship, the majority of the big hitters run the full schedule and literally make a decision based on which team members are peaking as the season arrives in January.

The GEICO Honda team shut out Mitch Payton's Pro Circuit squad in 2012 by winning both 250 titles. While two-time East champ Justin Barcia moves up to the 450 class full-time defending West champ Eli Tomac is back again although he most likely will race a 450 outdoors. Zach Osborne joins the team in 2013 and will race alongside Wil Hahn, Justin Bogle and Zach Bell. Tomac, Bogle and Bell are all graduates of the Factory Connection amateur program as they made their moves into the pro ranks.

The most successful Lites team in the history of AMA motocross and supercross – the Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki team – will be looking to gain the upper hand over Geico once more. Pro Circuit

returns with former West champ Dean Wilson. Wilson had been initially slated to take a 450cc ride on the Jeff Ward Racing Kawasaki team but Ward's team folded and that left Wilson looking for a ride. Pro Circuit stepped up and made room for him even though the team was already full with Blake Baggett, Tyla Rattray and Darryn Durham, rookie Justin Hill (younger brother of Josh Hill) and 250cc veteran Martin Davalos.

The Troy Lee team has pulled down a few 250 wins over the past few years with racer Cole Seely who should be a contender for the West title if he stays healthy – he missed most of 2012 with internal injuries from a practice crash at Salt Lake City. Jessy Nelson was a top amateur prospect who joined the team with much success outdoors in 2012 so he'll be making his supercross debut joined by Christian Craig. Craig has mostly raced 450s in the past couple of years but the Troy Lee team only does the West series so he'll likely be on a 250 out West as well.

Rockstar Energy Suzuki will be running four 250 racers, three of which are longtime veterans – Blake Wharton, Nico Izzzi and Ryan Sipes. Then there's Jason Anderson who has a lot of speed on tap and who just started showing what he's capable of. This is a solid team but the main question surrounds the strength of the equipment – the team's main competition will be Pro



STATS N' FACTS!

SOME WEIRD TRIVIA FROM AMERICA'S STADIUMS...

Although supercross was born in 1972 an officially recognised championship was only started in 1974 and came complete with 250 and 500cc classes... Believe it or not Austrian powerhouse KTM is the only major manufacturer never to have won a supercross title in the premier class – heck, even Maico, Husqvarna and Can-Am have all won a championship at one time or other... Only one rider has ever had a perfect season indoors – Jim Ellis went four for four on the Can-Am 250 in 1974 winning races in Dallas, Daytona, Houston and LA... James Stewart is the winningest Lites rider of all time with 18 main event victories to his name... As well as being the first place a four-stroke motorcycle won a supercross main event (Doug Henry, 1997) Las Vegas' Sam Boyd Stadium is also the last place a 250cc two-stroke took victory in a points-payer. Chad Reed is the man who went down in history for that one when he took the win in the finale of the 2005 season... In the entire history of supercross there's only been championship decided by a tie-breaker – Grant Langston took the 2005 East Coast 125 series over Josh Hansen after they both finished with 147 points... With more than one race a year in recent time it's not surprising that Anaheim holds the record for hosting the highest number of supercross races – A1 in 2013 will be the 51st visit to the Angels Stadium...



Circuit and GEICO and their bikes are incredibly stout.

The JDR Motorsports/JStar KTM team revolves around Malcolm Stewart. Malcolm has shown flashes of brilliance and has plenty of raw speed. The problem tends to be consistency or taming him down for the long haul. But that's where former champ Nathan Ramsey comes in as team manager because he knows the sport as well as anyone. With Stewart's second full year on KTMs we should see some much better results.

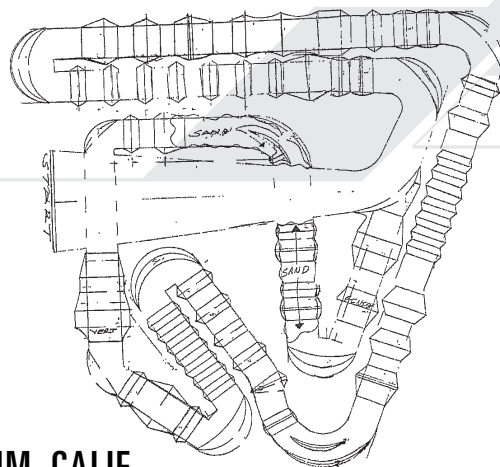
The Star Racing Yamaha team is small but mighty just like its two racers. Kyle Cunningham is a proven vet with a lot of speed. Outdoors in 2011 he spent most of the season as the top racer who didn't race for the Pro Circuit squad. He's returning to action with the team this year with a new team-mate – Jeremy Martin. Martin is fresh out of the amateur ranks and he's fast. His older brother, Alex Martin, who is a definite National and Supercross contender has said that Jeremy is faster – at least in practice.

And speaking of Alex Martin he joins his brother on Yamahas in 2013 after quite a few years on Hondas. Alex's team – Eleven 10 Mods – ran Hondas in 2012 but is going blue in 2013. This means lots of time riding with his little brother which will probably help them both as they head into Anaheim.

2013 AMA SX TRACK GUIDE!

THIS YEAR'S TRACKS LAID BARE...

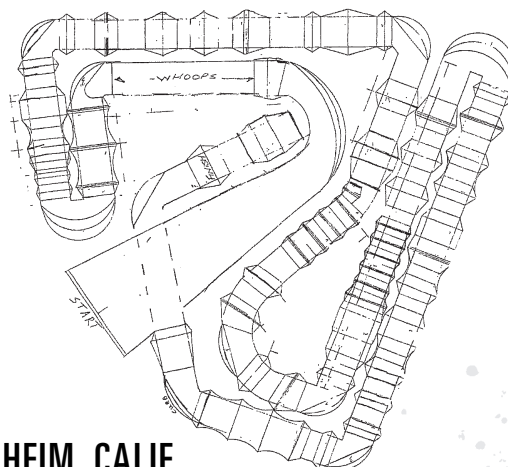
The tracks for the 2013 Monster Energy/AMA Supercross series are as punishing as the schedule and have been designed by Dirt Wurb to test the riders to the limit! We've assembled the technical drawings for the championship so you can check out what's in store for the racers in this year's 17-round series that starts in Anaheim and ends 18 weekends later in Las Vegas...



1. ANAHEIM, CALIF

JANUARY 5 – ANGEL STADIUM – 250SX WEST

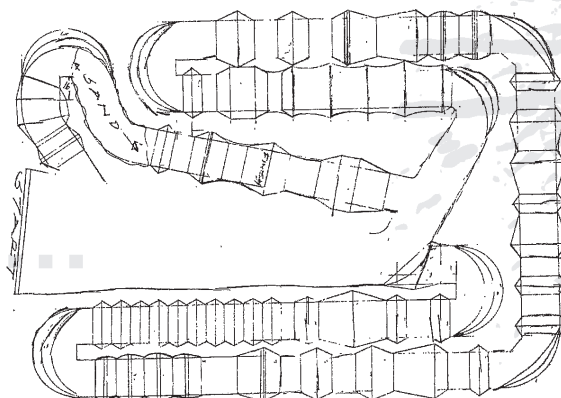
Anaheim is the big one and is the most anticipated race of the year – the house that Jeremy built has become synonymous with AMA Supercross. The track can be tricky and the dirt gets hard-packed during the day – even blue-grooved – but by the time the night show comes along the moisture settles on the track surface and it can get quite slippery. Weird stuff often happens at Anaheim 1 because of nerves and because some teams still need to work on getting their set up dialed in.



5. ANAHEIM, CALIF

FEBRUARY 2 – ANGEL STADIUM – 250SX WEST

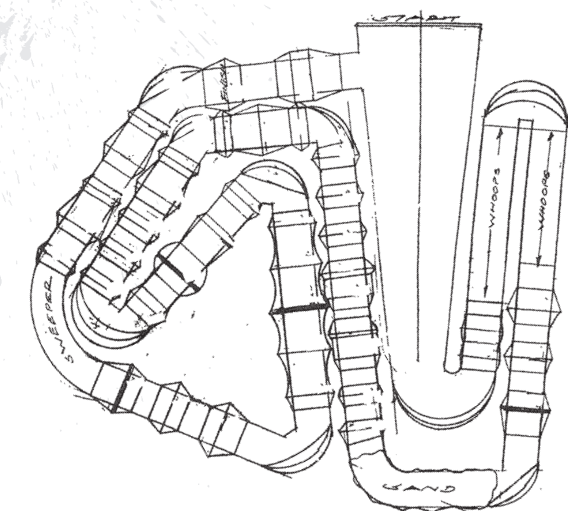
Anaheim 2 has only two 180-degree turns and one of them has such a short straight leading into it that it will be tough for anybody to get a run on anyone else. Time will be gained or lost in the section five turns into the race where there are jumps around a sweeping turn. This seems like an innocuous section but trying to get 450s around this section will take a lot of muscle. It wears guys down believe it or not.



9. ST. LOUIS, MO

MARCH 2 – EDWARD JONES DOME – 250SX EAST

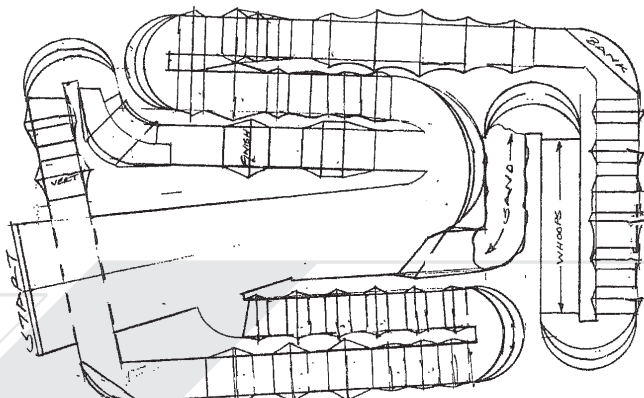
One of the more technical track designs of the season the big passing area in St. Louis will likely end up being right before the finish line. Racers can get a run down the start straight and there should be multiple ways to get through the sand. Get through it clean and get over the ensuing double clean and you can complete passes just before the finish. As it should be. Dirt tends to rut up and then dry out with ruts in it so it can be tricky.



4. OAKLAND, CALIF

JANUARY 26 – O.CO COLISEUM – 250SX WEST

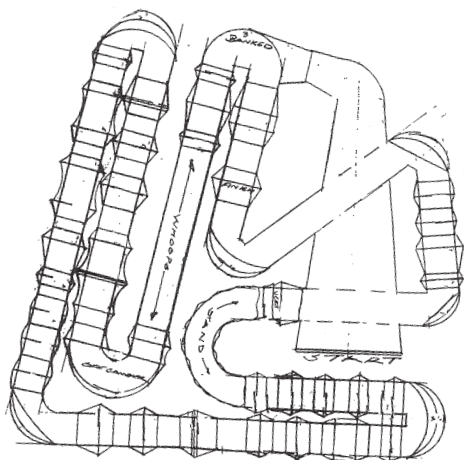
Oakland's stadium is a hybrid stadium but for this event the floor is laid out more like a baseball field than a football field. That being said there is literally only one legitimate 180-degree turn, not counting the first turn (since that turn is always so wide that it doesn't lead to much in the way of block-passes). The 180 on this track has whoops coming into it and going out of it so expect some aggression in that turn. Everywhere else, not so much...



8. ATLANTA, GA

FEBRUARY 23 – GEORGIA DOME – 250SX EAST

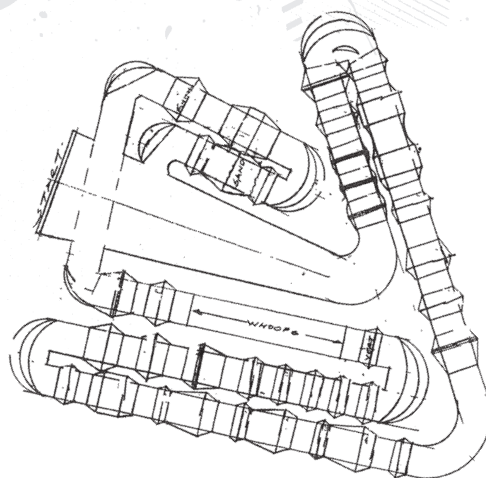
The Georgia Dome hosts some of the biggest crowds of the series almost every year – so consistently that there has been talk for years of doing an Eastern 'A2' and holding a second Atlanta race in the stadium. The dirt has traction for days and tends to be reddish in colour. It ruts up and the area where the racers enter the stadium (behind the start line this year) tends to dry out from the air blowing in. This means traction right off the gate is different from the rest of the track.



2. PHOENIX, ARIZ

JANUARY 12 – CHASE FIELD – 250SX WEST

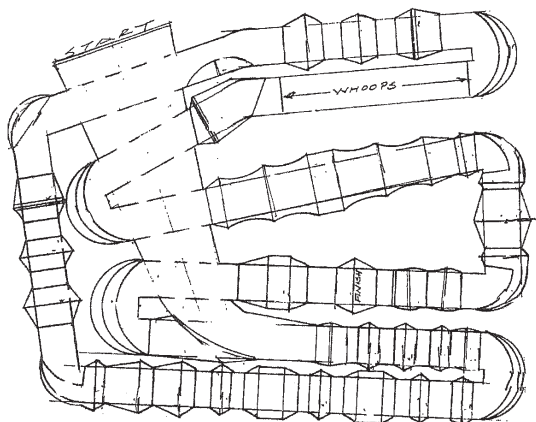
This year's track design in Arizona doesn't fit the normal mould of a baseball field as all but a few of the turns are a full 180 degrees. There are a few guys who go really well in Phoenix – which has dirt similar to Anaheim – but with a slightly sandier top soil. Jake Weimer usually hauls here, for example. Also, moisture doesn't come into play as much because the stadium has a retractable roof that normally stays closed. The sand section before crossing the start straight is in a turn which nearly always means it will end up one-lined.



3. LOS ANGELES, CALIF

JANUARY 19 – DODGER STADIUM – 250SX WEST

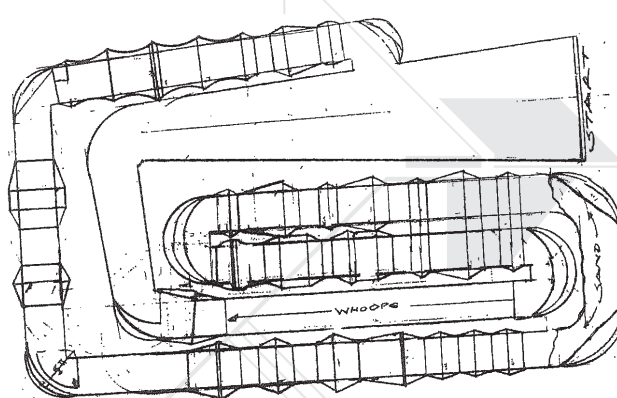
More closely fitting the stereotype for baseball fields the LA track features only four 180-degree turns. It's essentially the same dirt as the Anaheim tracks with the same characteristics once night-time falls. The rhythm section along the third-base line (three turns into the race) will be a factor as will the whoops which feature a wall before you get into them, preventing racers from carrying speed into the obstacle.



6. SAN DIEGO, CALIF

FEBRUARY 9 – QUALCOMM STADIUM – 250SX WEST

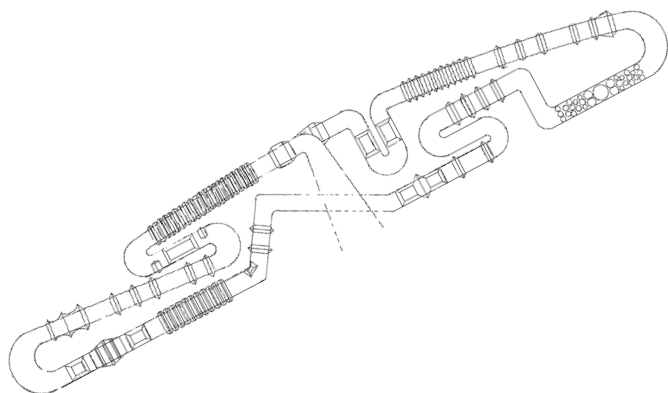
The first football stadium on the season illustrates the difference in track designs as most of the turns are 180s. This is also one of the largest stadium floors on the circuit. Chad Reed normally hauls in San Diego. The dirt has pretty epic traction, although the race has been marred by rain for much of the last few years. Still, the dirt is good enough to soak up some extra water and still be raceable.



7. ARLINGTON, TEX

FEBRUARY 16 – COWBOYS STADIUM – 250SX EAST

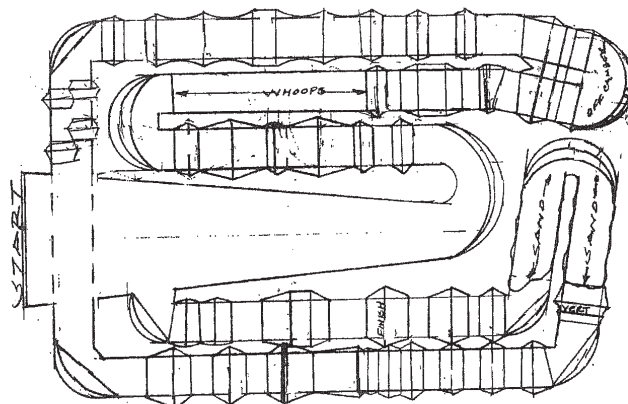
The track design in Arlington was originally vetoed by the AMA and FIM and had to be redesigned! The dirt here usually provides solid traction without rutting up too badly. It's a football stadium so passing should come easier and it's also the most expensive venue in the series. Cowboys Stadium is the largest domed stadium in the world and it cost \$1.15 billion to build. And we race dirt bikes in it. That's pretty cool.



10. DAYTONA, FLA

MARCH 9 – DAYTONA INTERNATIONAL SPEEDWAY – 250SX EAST

The official track design for Daytona isn't available just yet but there are a couple of things you can count on. Sand. There will be sand. Bad lighting. It will be hard to see at the ends of the track – especially once all of the ruts have shadows in them. Rain. It will probably rain either during the race, just prior to the race, or while the track is being built. Lots of racers run borderline outdoor setups on their bikes for this race and strong outdoor racers usually do better at Daytona.



11. INDIANAPOLIS, IND

MARCH 16 – LUCAS OIL STADIUM – 250SX EAST

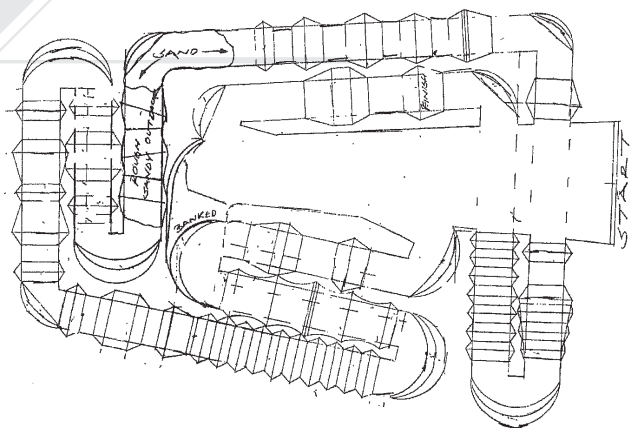
The start is going to be a big deal in Indianapolis because right out of the first turn the racers go into a tricky rhythm section then right into a long whoop section. Getting stuck in the back around sketchy racers when a top guy gets out front will probably be the difference between winning or losing. Indy has decent traction but it's nothing like tracks like Atlanta. It tends to dry out and get a bit slick on top. Patience and throttle control are key.



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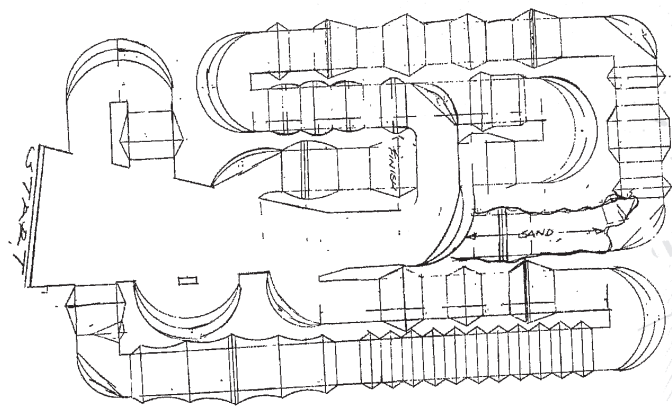
PREPARE
PREVENT



12. TORONTO, CANADA

MARCH 23 – ROGERS CENTRE – 250SX EAST

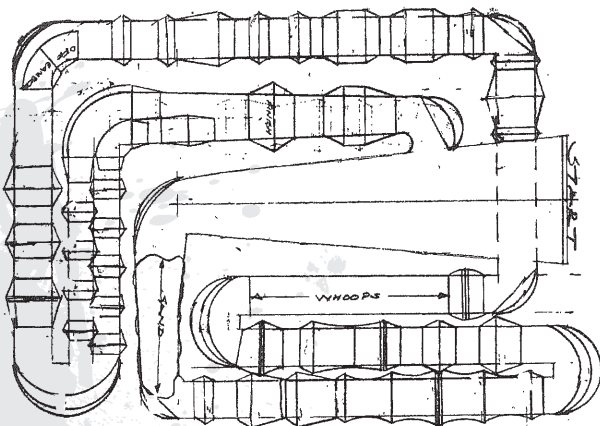
The Toronto event has been a bit of a weird one for years. One year the dirt was frozen when they brought it in to build the track. It thawed throughout the night leading to mud puddles in the transitions. That same year the ventilation system failed during opening ceremonies and the attached hotel ended up getting filled with firework smoke causing it to be evacuated. The dirt is a question mark here every year because of the climate. We won't know what we have until we get there.



13. HOUSTON, TEXAS

APRIL 6 – RELIANT STADIUM – 250SX EAST

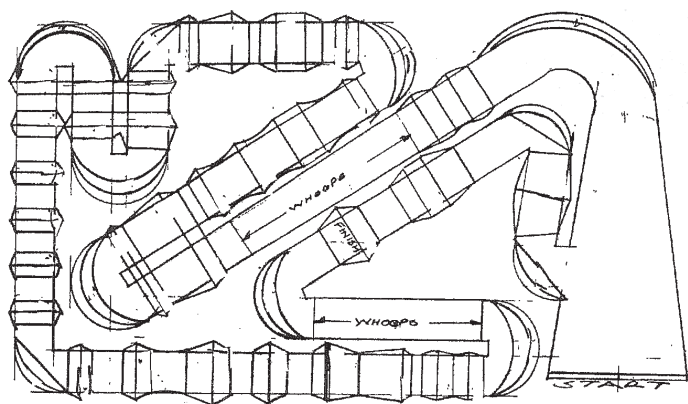
This track design looks almost schizophrenic and there is no time to rest. It crosses the start straight four times! This means the start straight will get rough and gate choice will be at a premium. There are 11 turns on this track so passing won't be easy – they're going to have to get aggressive. Expect the passing to look more like an arenacross than a supercross and expect a few top racers to be pissed off by the end of the night.



14. MINNEAPOLIS, MINN

APRIL 13 – METRODOME – 250SX EAST

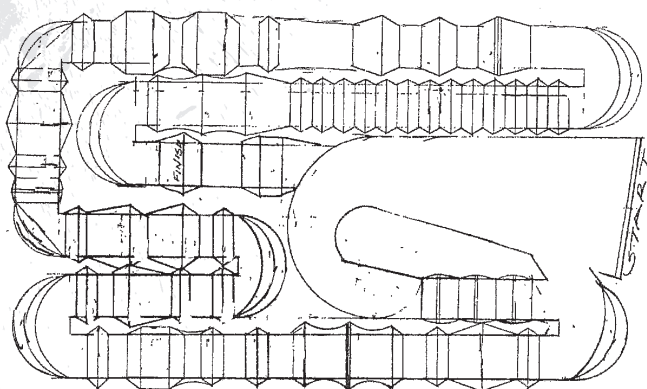
Minneapolis returns to the series for 2013. It's a favourite for former champ Ryan Dungey since he's from Minnesota and it's the closest he gets to having a hometown race. But it's going to get sketchy right off the start. It's a long start and it leads right into sand. It's going to be easy to get caught up in pileups off the start if you don't get a good jump. The roof is held up with air pressure so every time racers come through the tunnel they bring a lot of wind with them and it dries the track out in that corner of the stadium making tire choice a big key as well.



15. SEATTLE, WASH

APRIL 20 – CENTURYLINK FIELD – 250SX WEST

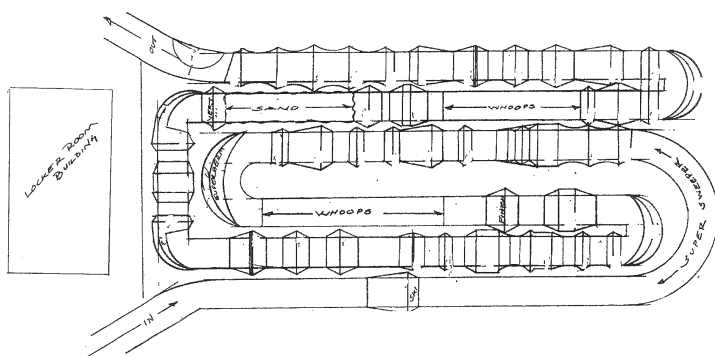
Seattle's track map also came under review and could be different than what you see here but there are a couple things you can usually count on. It will have a lot of 180-degree turns. The dirt is gravelly because it rains a lot in Seattle. The gravelly dirt helps keep the track in racing shape when it gets wet and it gets wet more often than not. It's defending champ Ryan Villopoto's home race and it's also the race that ended his 2012 season.



16. SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH

APRIL 27 – RICE-ECCLES STADIUM – 250SX WEST

Rice-Eccles is a weird one. No, not because it's in Mormon Utah but because it's usually really cold. A couple of years ago Kevin Windham nearly lapped second place while it was snowing. It's about a mile above sea level so bikes tend to be down on power. The start is one of the shortest on the year and the three jumps after the start will only be used off the start in each race.



17. LAS VEGAS, NEV

MAY 4 – SAM BOYD STADIUM – 250SX EAST/WEST

The finale is held in the smallest stadium in the series but lap times are still usually pretty long because the starting line and part of the is outside the stadium. The dirt gets very, very hard-packed and blue-grooved and temperatures during the day are frequently over 100 Fahrenheit – it is the desert after all. The track gets baked. Throttle control is everything in Vegas. And if the championship is on the line then nerves are an issue too.

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Interviews and photo by JP O'Connell

DBR: Who would you like to play you in a film of your life?

SE: "If he was still alive it would be Steve McQueen."

PB: "Brad Pitt."

DBR: What was the last lie that you told and who was it to?

SE: "I am really bad at lying. If I tell one then I can only keep hold of it for one or two minutes, I am a really bad liar and to be honest I really hate people that do lie in common life. I always want to be straight and be able to look people straight in the eyes."

PB: "I told my wife Ilona I will spend more time at home but it did not work out!"

DBR: Something you eat that you know you shouldn't?

SE: "I really like paprika crisps and hard sugar candy – in fact I like it too much!"

PB: "Chocolate, chocolate, chocolate."

DBR: Do you own a pair of pyjamas?

SE: "I just wear old t-shirts, I don't use pyjamas – they're old fashioned right?"

PB: "No, I'm always ready to race!"

DBR: What car do you drive?

SE: "Daily I use my Opel van as I can chuck my stuff in there, get Liam's bike in there and put all of our kit in it. My other car is a Porsche Panamera 4S."

PB: "Volkswagen Touareg."

DBR: What car would you drive if money were no object?

SE: "I fell in love with the Aston Martin because of the James Bond story, I used to love Bond as a kid and the Aston was so cool, it's got class, it's understated but also fast. Mind you a Bentley or a nice Rolls wouldn't be bad either!"

PB: "Wheelchair space is my problem – but I'd choose a Porsche 911."

DBR: If you could change anything about yourself what would it be?

SE: "It would be nice to have some hair again! It was a tough time for me losing my hair but I've got over it now – well more or less"

PB: "Patience is not my strong point and this can be difficult for people around me, I would like to be calmer."

DBR: If you could meet any person – dead or alive – who would it be?

SE: "My uncle Pierre – who was very dear to me – passed away a long time ago and it would be very nice to meet him again so I could talk to him and hear his voice. To be able to introduce him to my kids would be something special."

PB: "I know so many great people so to be honest I don't look for better ones."

DBR: The most embarrassing thing you've done while drunk?

SE: "To be honest I don't think I've ever done anything that embarrassing after drinking – well nothing I'm going to tell you anyway!"

PB: "I was not embarrassed but I remember that Ricky Carmichael was surprised at the des Nations party in 1999 when I ripped down

his whole shirt. Stefan and myself together at the same party pushed Mitch Payton with his whole wheelchair into the pool."

DBR: What's your most prized material possession?

SE: "My trophy collection and my championship winning bikes as I have kept all of them. Those bikes are very important to me as they have got me to where I am today, I have a good life, they built my house – they gave me everything."

PB: "I love watches."

DBR: Favourite race you've ever been in?

SE: "I have a few wins that I am very proud of but the one in Austria in '02 where I didn't lead for a single lap but took the win on the last turn from Yves Demaria was unbelievable. I was still buzzing about it two months later."

PB: "A very special day was Gaildorf in 1997. I won the GP in front of my home crowd after a nice battle with Stefan. Like I said before, when I had a great day and could race with S72. This was always special. If you could battle with him usually you made it on the podium."

DBR: How often do you Google yourself?

SE: "I think in my life I have done it two or three times, no more."

PB: "I found out if I Google my name and click on pictures I can find nice pictures but there's nothing new I can learn about me there."

DBR: Blonde or brunette?

SE: "I like all colours!"

PB: "Shaved!"

DBR: Is winning a race better than sex?

SE: "The difference with sex is that you only have the really exciting moment for a few seconds and yet if I won a race I could enjoy it for 24 hours."

PB: "It depends on the race track."

DBR: What's your most annoying habit?

SE: "I can sometimes be a bit too direct and to the point."

PB: "Being late."

DBR: What's the worst motocross related decision you've made during your career?

SE: "I wouldn't have gone to Husqvarna in 2000 and should have stopped the relationship with Dave Grant in '99."

PB: "I went to Skittles Yamaha and left Jan de Groot which was a big mistake."

DBR: If you had to permanently give up either the internet, mobile phone or TV which would it be?

SE: "TV as I can watch it on the internet!"

PB: "You can have it all but e-mail and mobile phone is the worse part of my job. There is not one minute left a day without any electronic rubbish in your head."

DBR: Something about yourself that nobody else knows?

SE: "I really enjoy playing the drums and I sometimes used to jump in and play the last 10 minutes for a local band called the Baker Men!"

PB: "I really enjoy playing... let's leave it like that – nobody knows!"





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A crash in Morocco makes Dakar preparation difficult for the three-time winner

DAKAR OR
JUST!

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Starting the world's most gruelling off-road motorcycle race injured certainly isn't ideal. Not by anyone's standards. But starting this year's Dakar Rally fresh from injury is exactly what Marc Coma is going to have to do. As a three time winner of the glorious event Marc knows only too well just how demanding this year's event will be on his body, mind and machine. He also knows that the Dakar is no place for the faint hearted. In a race covering upwards of 10,000km during 15 days of competition weaknesses are rapidly magnified. But for the KTM rider it's a situation he's no option but to deal with best he can.

In his final pre-Dakar event before machinery was shipped out to South America, Coma crashed heavily during the Morocco Rally back in mid-October. Starting stage three second on the road the Spaniard was pushing hard and possibly taking a few too many risks to catch race leader and arch rival Cyril Despres. Clipping a stump of camel grass hidden in the sandy ground Coma was instantly ejected over the handlebars of his KTM 450 Rally at high speed. Landing heavily, the force was enough to dislocate his shoulder.

With just nine weeks before the start of the Dakar it was an injury Marc could most certainly do without. With aspirations of capturing a fourth Dakar Rally victory severely battered, Coma now faces a race against time to be fit to race...

DBR: What happened to you during the Morocco Rally?

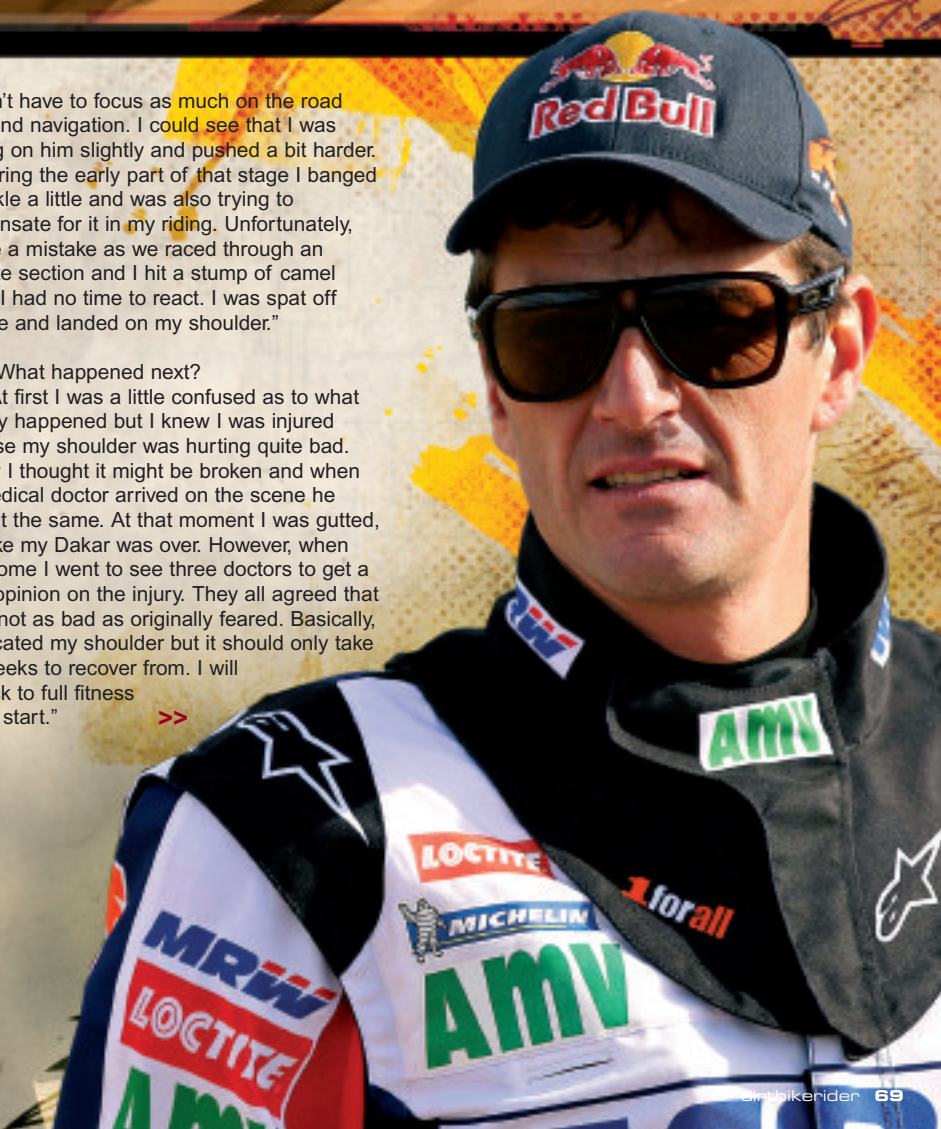
MC: "On day three I was pushing hard to catch up to Cyril. He had started first on the road and I was second. I knew that if I could catch him I

wouldn't have to focus as much on the road book and navigation. I could see that I was gaining on him slightly and pushed a bit harder. But during the early part of that stage I banged my ankle a little and was also trying to compensate for it in my riding. Unfortunately, I made a mistake as we raced through an off-piste section and I hit a stump of camel grass. I had no time to react. I was spat off my bike and landed on my shoulder."

DBR: What happened next?

MC: "At first I was a little confused as to what actually happened but I knew I was injured because my shoulder was hurting quite bad. Initially I thought it might be broken and when the medical doctor arrived on the scene he thought the same. At that moment I was gutted, I felt like my Dakar was over. However, when I got home I went to see three doctors to get a wider opinion on the injury. They all agreed that it was not as bad as originally feared. Basically, I dislocated my shoulder but it should only take four weeks to recover from. I will be back to full fitness for the start."

>>



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COMA'S...

FIRST LOVE

"It was hard to forget the 690. That was a bike I spent almost seven years with and established my career on. I was involved in the development process from the very first test session until the final victory. It's easier to ride the 450 faster in the technical terrain but then the 690 is better on the long straights. Both bikes are quite different but the 690 will always be my first love."

FIRST DESERT EXPERIENCE

"It's hard to explain but the feeling of entering the sand dunes for the first time was incredible. I remember arriving there and I was in awe. All around me was a sea of dunes, each one looking the same – they make you feel so small. I think it's something everybody should try to experience at least once."

FIRST DAKAR RALLY

"My first Dakar Rally was back in 2002. I rode a prototype CSV with a Suzuki engine that we had developed in Spain. We were late getting it finished and arrived straight to the race without any proper testing. In the muddy prologues in Europe I was sixth fastest but still managed to stay inside the top 20 when we moved into Africa. Unfortunately, I only made it as far as the rest day and was forced to stop. But I got far enough to experience my first taste of Africa and sand dunes – I was hooked on it after that."

FIRST DAKAR RALLY WIN

"I'm fortunate enough to have won the Dakar Rally three times but the first one will always be special. It was in 2006 and I was riding the 690 – the bike I helped to develop. I managed to take the lead after the fourth stage and hold it right until the finish. It means a lot because winning in Africa is now a thing of the past but a place where so many legends of our sport were born. To have my name on that list of winners in Africa gives me a lot of satisfaction."

KTM REPSOL RED BULL JUNIOR TEAM

"For a long time I've wanted to give something back to my sport. When I started to race it was difficult to find the right resources to advance. I didn't know who to speak to and made many mistakes. Together with my personal manager Jordi Duran we decided to set-up a race team to give the younger riders a chance to succeed. We've been running it for five years now and all the time we try to teach them about working in a professional team. Racing is more than just riding a bike, it's about working with a mechanic to find the right setup, talking to sponsors and still having a normal routine. Unfortunately, none of this is written in a book so they must learn for themselves but with our help they can hopefully avoid some of the mistakes I made."



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DBR: As bad as the injury was we're guessing things could have been a lot worse?

MC: "Exactly. I was lucky not to break any bones and now with the right amount of rehab and physio I should arrive in South America at full fitness. Obviously injuries never come at the right time and it's frustrating that it's happened but it hasn't affected my preparation too much. We have been focused hard on preparing for the Dakar since August and we're ahead of schedule. Normally I'd stop riding during the month of December but now with the injury we'll do some final adjustments to be ready for the start of the race on January 5."

DBR: For a long time both yourself and Cyril have been the best performing international rally riders. How difficult is it to fight for the victory yet still work together as team-mates?

MC: "For sure it isn't easy. At times the awning can feel a little small but that's just how it is. We've worked together for a long time and have learned to respect each other. There can be a lot of pressure to deal with – after all the Dakar is one of the biggest races in the world and it can feel like the whole world is watching you. But we're both professional in what we do and have the best team of people around to support us."

DBR: With so many new manufactures entered in this year's event the level of competition seems to have significantly increased. Are you

excited about what this year's Dakar will deliver?

MC: "I'm really excited about the direction the race is headed. For a long time it was a fight for victory between Cyril and myself. Hopefully with so many manufactures interested in competing it can open up the level of competition and allow more riders to challenge for win. I think it will make the race much more unpredictable and then tactics will become less important. When almost 10 people can win the race then the measure of victory becomes all the greater."

DBR: Do you study what your rivals like HRC Honda and Husqvarna are doing?

MC: "Of course we are curious to see what people like Honda are doing. They had a strong set-up in Morocco and you must open your eyes to see other ways and methods. But in the end you must also believe in your own programme. This is the one you need to fully trust in. KTM are the best team in the paddock, we have many years of rally experience and we are the team everybody still wants to beat."

DBR: Along with new manufactures we're also seeing an increase of younger riders to rally. Are you keeping an eye of their progress?

MC: "Yes, it's important to keep an eye on the competition and it's great to see the next generation of rally riders emerge. But a race like the Dakar takes time to learn. It's 15 days of incredibly tough riding. First you must learn to >>>



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Coma's passion for Rally racing means he's started his own race team to nurture fresh talent

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ride in the desert before you can race in it. It took me many years to learn the ground, gain confidence in my riding and understand the navigation before I could take more risk. All this is something that cannot be bought and must be developed. I hope they take their time to learn and not rush into trying to win too soon."

DBR: January will mark the third season of using the 450 in rally competition. How has the bike evolved during this time?

MC: "Honestly, it hasn't changed too much. We worked hard to have it ready for the first season and I think we managed to get it right almost straight away. Since then we've only had some small changes here and there. The biggest thing we've worked hard to improve on is endurance.

With the new rule changes if you need to change more than two engines then your chance of winning is finished. So for us, it was critical to improve the endurance without affecting the performance of the engine and I think we've achieved that."

DBR: As a rider that has both raced and won in Africa and South America do you think the popularity of the event has grown considerably since it switched continents?

MC: "Personally, I'll always be a lover of Africa – racing there was very special to me. But we needed to be realistic about protecting the race. Africa was becoming increasingly dangerous so South America was the right option. Five years on and it's easy to see why. South America is an emerging economy, which is good for

manufactures. We've also moved into new terrain with countries like Peru offering new deserts to race in so that's good for us riders too. Overall the sport has moved in the right direction for everybody."

DBR: Finally, after your disappointing end in 2012 how important is it to return to the top of the podium in January?

MC: "Although the Morocco Rally didn't end in the best way, it did start off strong. My riding was good. I was pleased with my navigation and felt comfortable on the bike. These ingredients are important for a successful Dakar and even though I'm injured I'm confident I'll be ready when I ride off the start ramp in Lima. After that we'll just have to see how the race goes but I believe I can deliver a good result."



Next time he went he was armed with his mum's Kodak Brownie camera.
After art college he mixed life as a graphic designer, magazine art director, photographer and part-time art college tutor with motocross and photo-journalism. Now he's a commentator, painting pictures with words. He never did get a proper job...

Jack Burnicle is the godfather (our words, not his) of British MX Journalism. Born in Billingham, County Durham, to Bella and nutty (his words, not ours) musical genius Stan Burnicle, Jack was mad about cars and motor racing as a kid.
At sweet 16 he got a motorbike, rode it to a local 'scramble' and was instantly, hopelessly hooked.

FABULOUS 500 DEBUT:
VAN DOORN LEADS
THORPE IN 1986 MX
DES NATIONS, MAGGIORA



RAMBO!

DUTCH HARD MAN GERT JAN VAN DOORN'S LENGTHY CAREER
SPANNED 18 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP SEASONS AND WAS
LADEN WITH HIGHLIGHTS...

Words and photos by Jack Burnicle

DESCRIPTION SIGNALEMENT

Bearer Titulaire		* Wife Femme	
Occupation	GRAPHIC DESIGNER		
Profession			
Place of birth	BILLINGHAM		
Lieu de naissance			
Date of birth	9/1/47		
Date de naissance			
Country of Residence	ENGLAND		
Pays de Résidence			
Height	5	ft.	11 in.
Taille		ft.	in.

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Jack Burnicle



VAN DOORN (SUZUKI)
BURSTS ON TO GRAND
PRIX SCENE 3rd IN
OPENING ROUND OF 1984
AT ST JEAN D'ANGELEY

The man who led the Netherlands to within a hairs-breadth of winning the MX des Nations at Valkenswaard in 1991 also enjoyed one of the most prolonged and distinguished lives in grand prix racing. Although inevitably overshadowed by younger compatriots who clinched world crowns Gert-Jan van Doorn won both 250 and 500 GPs during a top class career spanning 18 years.

Riding principally for Suzuki, Honda and the Italian Cagiva factory the man from De Lepen was born on November 23 1964 and quickly made a name in Dutch national championships finishing 13th in the 125 series as a 15 year old in 1980. Advancing to seventh in 1981, van Doorn won the title a year later and just 17 years old, ventured on to a world stage packed with superstars. Suzuki trio Eric Geboers, Harry Everts and Akira Watanabe, Gilera's Corrado Maddi and Michele Rinaldi, Yamaha duo Marc Velkeneers and Jacky Vimond – it was a daunting line-up. But the Dutch teenager acquitted himself well. Seventh in the opening

moto in his native sand, seventh overall in France and top six in Sweden, van Doorn exhibited a classy, all-terrain style rare in the Dutch sand specialists of that era.

A cocky, confident kid who quickly acquired the nickname 'Rambo' he moved impatiently on to 250s, finishing second in the 1983 Dutch nationals and 20th in the world where sand was still his best friend. Fourth overall in the Dutch GP at Markelo he also claimed a first-race seventh place in the first moto at Hawkstone Park!

1984 proved pivotal. Van Doorn powered to his first 250 national title on a Suzuki and sprang to our attention on the international front with a rousing third place in the opening round at fast, stoney St Jean d'Angely in France. He then rocketed to his first grand prix moto win and overall victory at Sittendorf, in Austria – rough, slick, rocky, steep and completely alien to most Dutchmen! A further rostrum in Yugoslavia helped him to sixth in the table just 30 points behind another Suzuki rising star, third-placed Englishman Jem Whatley. He was also crowned European indoor Supercross champion in a

series devised and run by Dutch entrepreneur Bob de Jong using wooden boards and including a round in the NEC at Birmingham...

The following season van Doorn was signed up by the WP Honda team run by suspension specialist Henk Thuis, the bike tuned by fabled guro Jan de Groot and backed by (literal) paint giant Venko. Mr Venko was a huge amiable bloke who spoke no English but boomed at you so cheerfully in Dutch that you were quite convinced you knew what he was talking about! It was a massive year and after a sluggish grand prix start behind pacemakers Vimond and Rinaldi, Rambo dominated the third round at Schwanenstadt (Austria again!), relishing the fast, grassy cambers and huge hills. A third in Italy followed, at the 'outdoor supercross' of Arsago Seprio, before one of the most exhilarating grands prix motos I've ever seen.

Round another wide open, grassy valley at Borgloon, in Belgium, van Doorn, Arno Drechsel (KTM) and Gilera's Marc Velkeneers fought a blistering contest, tall Tyrolean Drechsel just edging out van Doorn and Velkeneers in a blanket finish. Then a huge thunderstorm >>

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struck and reduced Borgloon to a swamp. While Vimond sank in the quagmire, van Doorn forced to a determined third. This result thrust the Venko Honda into the title lead, four points ahead of Vimond and 20 in front of defending champion Heinz Kinigadner.

But his rivals hit back in Czecho and France where 'GJ' suffered two second-race DNFs. He would recover brilliantly, but too late, in the final three rounds – another dominant double in his home race at Lichtenvoorde combined with moto wins in Russia and Germany sealed a fine third in the final standings behind 'Kini' and Vimond. He also claimed a second Dutch title and in 1986 launched straight into a head-on conflict with Vimond, winning the opening moto at a nasty, wet Venray.

But if the mercurial van Doorn lacked one vital ingredient it was consistency. So often, a good race would be followed by a no-score. Leading race two, he crashed and snapped his handlebars to go 20-0 in Holland – Vimond an almost apologetic overall winner! – and 0-20 at Villars sous Escot in France. He and Jacky were neck-and-neck with Rinaldi joining in the fun until GJ got hurt, missed three rounds, then sprang back with a scalding double in the final GP in Sweden to snatch back third in the title table from Whatley's Cagiva! There followed a sensational open class debut in that famous MX

des Nations at Maggiora where Rambo, still only 21, finished third 500 overall, beaten only by David Bailey and Dave Thorpe!

Van Doorn also clinched his Dutch national hat-trick and looked set to launch another major grand prix assault in 1987 as Cagiva's new factory star alongside Pekka Vehkonen. But first he headed brashly over to the States to contest the opening rounds of the AMA Supercross series – and absolutely smashed himself to bits in a huge crash. Multiple injuries, including head and facial damage, sidelined the dashing Dutchman for almost the entire '87 season though he typically returned at Sweden's final round with a ripping second overall behind new world champ Geboers!

Staying with the Italian concern, van Doorn was let down at the opening rounds of 1988 in France and Spain by the Cagiva's fragile motor. His form subsequently picked up dramatically – a superb fourth place (and best European) at Unadilla behind winner Rick Johnson and eventually, too late, another resounding double race victory in Sweden's final round to finish fourth in the world just five points shy of American bronze medallist Rodney Smith.

Still, inconsistency had dogged the erratic Dutchman who rarely stuck two good motos back-to-back though he did reclaim Holland's 250 title and replicated that season in 1989,

once more fourth in the world (behind the man he regarded as the greatest – Jean-Michel Bayle) and Dutch 250 champion. Back on a Honda, injury sidelined van Doorn for the second half of 1991 after another good Scandinavian tour had yielded a pair of rostrum finishes. Then came that pulsating one-off ride on a CR500 in the MX des at Valkenswaard that so nearly claimed the home country's only victory!

A disappointing season on a 250 Kawasaki followed with a fourth in the opening Dutch round but little else to show. Back on a Honda in 1993, Rambo won the 250cc German International 'Deutsche Meisterschaft' before, in 1994, crowning his credentials as a truly talented all-rounder. Riding a Sarholz Honda, he won his first ever 500 grand prix, Switzerland's opening round at Payerne (yes, fast, sweeping grassy cambers and climbs again!) and briefly topped the table until injury intervened before what should have been his favourite venue – Hawkstone Park. He returned three rounds later and eventually finished fourth in the world – while also placing third in the 125cc 'Deutsche Meisterschaft'!

The next two seasons saw van Doorn finish twice sixth in the 500cc world championship, registering rostrum finishes in Ireland (twice!) and Germany. Slipping to seventh in 1997, despite a second place in the opening round at Lommel, rostrums at Castiglione del Lago, in Italy and Germany's final round of 1998 stole back sixth in the world from fellow Honda pilot Rob Herring!

By now 34 years old van Doorn's 18th and last season of world championship competition – in 1999 – found him riding a four-stroke VOR to top ten finishes in Italy and the Czech Republic before calling time on his foreign adventures. Since when Dutch teams like the late Jan de Groot's factory Kawasaki squad and Beursfoen Suzuki have called on the skills and knowledge of one of Holland's most stylish and successful grand prix motocrossers who won six GPs putting him on a par with legends like Graham Noyce and Danny Laporte!



GERT-JAN VAN DOORN FINISHED 4TH IN 1988 250 WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP ON FAST BUT FRAGILE FACTORY CAGIVA



VAN DOORN ENJOYS AN ENGLISH ICE LOLLY AT FAIRLEIGH CASTLE IN 1986



VAN DOORN ABLESTAYS 1988 US 250 GP AT UNADILLA AHEAD OF CAGIVA TEAM-MATE PEKKA VEHKONEN (2).



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Power is nothing without control so while it's nice to have a tuned motor that will get you into turn one ahead of the pack it's all kinda pointless if you can't stop for the corner and you end up blowing through the barriers and several startled spectators before nailing the side of Burger Dave's British Burger Bar and spilling his collection of condiments all over the place.

Although they might seem complicated with their hydraulic hoses, wavy discs and whatnot modern brake systems are actually really simple and so long as you keep on top of your maintenance will perform perfectly time after time after time. When it comes down to it

there's basically just two major players in the equation – the hydraulics which we're gonna take a look at next month and then the discs and pads.

This month we're looking at the pads and if they wear, glaze or become contaminated then you need to change them. A decent set of aftermarket pads will not leave a gaping hole in your bank balance and will help you knock seconds off your lap times. The most damaging influence on our brakes is dirt. Abrasive dirt can demolish a set of pads in a single event and once they start to wear unevenly can make the action seem spongy as they lose some of their efficiency...



07 While the calliper is off clean it with a soft bristled wire brush. Do not pull the brake lever at this point because both pistons'll pop out and then you'll have to clean 'em, pop 'em back in and then bleed the system...



08 If the top spring clip has come out you'll need to put it back in but take note that there is a front and a back. While we're in this neck of the woods we're gonna lightly grease the calliper sliders.

BRAKECHECK!

DR DIRT DIDDLES WITH DISC PADS – DUN DUN DUNNN!

Words by **ROBIN BAYMAN** photos by **ANDREW WALCH**



01 Unscrew the brake pad pin – which usually is an Allen bolt or an 8mm hex head. Brembo brakes use ‘R’ clips through the pin though which makes things simpler.



02 Completely remove the pin. With particularly worn brakes the pads or anti-rattle plate may just drop out at this stage. It's no biggie if they do but watch your toes!



03 If they haven't already fallen out then pull the pads and rattle plate out. The job of the rattle plate is to stop the pads rattling and keep them in close proximity to the disc. Try and take note which direction the rattle plate comes out.



04 At this point clean the pin with a wire brush and check for steps in the shaft. If you have wear, replacement aftermarket pins are available for the price of a pint of lager (unless you drink in The Palatine near DBR Towers in which case a pin is much less).



05 Examine the pads with your eyes. Here there are some worn pads next to some new pads. If you have got this far put then you may as well put new ones in – it's not really worth using the old ones but they will make good spares.



06 At this point take the calliper right off the bike. Two bolts usually hold the front calliper in place while the rear one slides off once the axle and wheel are removed.



09 Now everything is clean this is the right time to fit the anti-rattle plate. Actually, it's the only time because if you pop the pads in first you'll only have to take them out again...



10 Re-assemble and fit the new pads. If the pads are too close to fit back over the disc you can use a clean broad bladed flat screwdriver or tyre lever to prise the pads open.



11 Once everything is back on the bike and tight pump the brake a couple of times to close the pads up. There's nothing worse than finding there's nothing there as you speed into the first corner so make sure you do this.



M-Tuck slides around a Marshyfield bend...

TEST FEST!

AFTER A SMALL BREAK THE DBR WRECKING CREW ARE BACK IN ACTION AND DOING WHAT THEY DO BEST — WRECKING STUFF...

WORDS AND PICTURES BY TEAM DBR

Mixed results have hit our outgoing Over 35s South West champ this season but none of this is due to the awesome and super smooth RM-Z450. Suzuki has built a beauty and we've refined it further with every part we've bolted on performing perfectly.

I have to say the Renthal Intellilevers have been off the scale as Martinez has fully tested these units to the max on both the RM-Z and the ex SuttDawg RM-X which has been upside down more times than a roller coaster car.

The smooth power delivery is still the biggest talking point from Martyn when discussing the Z. Every single improvement made for 2012 has been a positive and we look forward to getting our hands on the '13 model to

put some major hours on it. Basically, the RM-Z has allowed Martyn to take race wins due to its easy to ride motor and the great chassis set up in both stock and SR75/Fox Shox settings.

Through this season we have used a grand total of four oil filters, six air filters, nine litres of Motorex motor oil, two sets of Renthal chain and sprockets, four rear tyres and two fronts. We have lost a grand total of one plastics bolt. The RM-Z has been serviced regularly and therefore it keeps running absolutely perfectly as it is meant to.

The bike is washed and dried then kept in a warm environment so the EFI unit and connections never get damp and every moving part has been greased and kept well lubed so all stays smooth. We're struggling to find fault

with the Suzuki and even the occasional between gears moment does not detract from performance as Martyn rides the bike smooth and optimises the nature of the grunting, powerful motor.



2012 SUZUKI RM-Z450
RIDER: MARTYN TUCKER

WAKKER'S (A) WEAPON!

HUSKY 310 TAKES A SOAKING OR TWO BUT KEEPS ON CLOCKING UP THE HOURS

The little Husqvarna has taken a right beating since my last update. I've added another 22 hours on the clock and each moment has been pretty much pinned. The highlight of my riding has been a three day ride out on the Isle of Man. Robin Powell of the mighty Molson Group has a big day coming up so Jonners Wilson organised a trip to the awesome island with Alex Rockwell as our ride guide.

This proved to be the major road trip launch of the SR75iDBR van of power and myself and Martinez Tucker managed to squeeze seven dirt bikes into the medium wheelbase beauty! Loaded! We all had a brilliant time on the island and myself and Alex spent some time on a few short extreme sections to give the bike a good workout in between the miles of fast rocky going.

The Husky has taken a beating as every test bike should and it's now been fully under water twice which is something I know Suttly likes to do with his trials bikes. The first time was at my test track and the second in the bogs of South Wales. Sorry Husky Dave but this is testing DBR style...

The bike has proved to be absolutely bullet proof and in the last couple of months I have had a grand total of two bolts come loose! One on the rear mudguard and one on the headlight mount. When you remember that the bike is being ridden as hard as I can

make it go that's impressive stuff. The more time I spend on the bike the easier it feels to ride and throw about.

The 2012 Husky TE310 is not the fastest bike out there but I am struggling to find fault with it from a run what you bring point of view. This 100 per cent stock bike has and will continue to take a kicking from us here at DBR until Husky Dave takes it and rips it from our grubby mitts. What a bike!



2012 HUSQVARNA TE310
RIDER: GEOFF WALKER

Ed's a fan of the
One Industries
Defcon kit...



ONE INDUSTRIES DEFCON RACEWEAR

One Industries are way out there at the moment and after looking at their Lightspeed Orange colour way from the Defcon range I'd love to be in a design meeting with them because I think it may have taken place in a night club. Personally, I love the contrast between the black and the bright colours and the strong bold orange One Industries logo – the fact that the helmet matches the kit is brilliant too. So the design is dialed and looking as cool as a midnight outing with a glitter ball spinning round at a hundred miles an hour but what about the functionality of the design?

From a coach's point of view, clothing that is light, easy to move around in and close fitting is important. The heavier the clothing the more energy is used to move and the stiffer the clothing the more resistance there is to physically move. Using additional energy is bad and anyone who goes out cycling on the roads will tell you that the closer your clothes fit the better because being more streamlined gives you more

speed – and speed is good!

The jersey has a great cut. The arms have a funky mesh shape panel underneath – from the armpit down to the inside of the elbow – that gets rid of heat easily and lets the jersey fit comfortably when the arms are bent. The material near the cuffs is close fitting so there's no need for a tight elasticated band – this allows easy blood flow.

The cut around the neck means that the material can lay flat around your shoulders without restriction and it doesn't let a load of roost down your front – or back! The only bad thing about the material used is that where the shirt has been hammered by dirt and stones the roost nicks the material and white pills appear which makes it look a bit tatty.

The pants are even better with a light elasticated material behind the knee so there's no uncomfortable grouping of material when your leg is fully bent. The leather stays strong and supple after plenty of washing

and the waist fastening is a strong, robust ratchet that is easy to use. The knees have plenty of room for braces thanks to a band of stretchy material above the knee cap. That said, if you only wear knee pads like I do they're not so roomy that your knee feels like it's in a cloth TARDIS with enough room for Daleks to have a shoot out in there with you!

The Armada gloves have a great palm that fits really well so there's no grouping up of extra material that can give you blisters at the bottom of your fingers. There's not a great deal of protection and the plastic strip across the top of the knuckles wasn't wide enough for my shovels so I found that to be a bit restrictive until I stretched it a bit! But all in all I really can't grumble and must admit I'm actually a huge fan...

Price: Pants: £129.99 Jersey: £34.99 Gloves: £29.99
Supplier: oneindustrieseurope.com
Contact: 0844 692 8111



MIND FREAK!

IN THE FIRST OF A SERIES ABOUT HOW TO PERFORM AT YOUR BEST ED
BRADLEY WANTS YOU TO SIT DOWN AND THINK THINGS THROUGH...

WORDS BY ED BRADLEY

As humans we generate habits over time and get into routines. A routine most motocross racers get into is racing from March to October before resting for a month then commencing winter training and starting that whole cycle all over again. That's all well and good if you're hitting the goals you've set for yourself each year but if you're not...

Albert Einstein's definition of insanity is 'doing the same thing over and over again and expecting different results' so if your race results aren't hitting the spot take the wild-haired one's advice and mix things up!

During the winter months when there's not so much racing going on it's quite easy to find articles on improving your bike, physical conditioning and a few on mental preparation but is there something else? Is there something you can do that will make your next year the best you've ever had?

I'm going to suggest to you something that could make the difference for your racing which only requires sitting down and investing time with your own thoughts! How do you feel about that? After all it won't cost anything extra and you will be warm, dry and comfortable and you won't be physically challenged.

But even so sitting down and investing some time in yourself is one of those things that's so hard to motivate yourself to do. Life just seems to get in the way, stuff can always be done later or we find something that has to be done first and we rattle around among the chaos and randomness of our thoughts as we flit from one thing to another without generating any solid foundation.

To start off with let me ask the question – how the hell do you know? Before you start lording yourself up for

what you're going to do next season ask yourself what was the previous season like for you? Did your bike continually break? Did you crash too often? Were you just too slow? Or did you get great starts and win races? How do you know you had a good or bad year? Spend some time on your own and make notes of the standout things that didn't work and a list of things that did work for you. How was your year? To do that you will have had to make some kind of measurement. What did you compare your results too?

Some people will have an image in their mind of what they think or what they think other people think they should have achieved while some people want to satisfy their ego by just beating a certain rival. Others will have a position that they want to finish and when they finish in that position they will feel an enormous sense of satisfaction and accomplishment.

Comparing your results with thought-up images in your mind of what you wish to achieve or images of what you think others want you to achieve can create internal conflict and tend to be unstable as they can change depending on how you are feeling. And aiming to beat certain rivals depends on how they do – not you! You will find that the most successful riders choose a specific position they want to finish and without hesitation go whole hearted in achieving it.

So what position do you want to finish at the end of next year's championship? What result will give you great, personal satisfaction? Think about it.

Now, with that in mind, where are you now in relation to that result? As you consider this make a note of what resources you need to make this result a reality. Your bike, the people around you, money, fitness program, improved bike

skills and what mental resources do you need? Determination, motivation, mental toughness, persistence etc.

Knowing what resources you need will strengthen your weaknesses and improve your personal growth because you'll need to find out stuff that you currently don't know about. If you did then they wouldn't be a weakness. If you do then you need to find a better source of information so you can make the extra gains you need.

To get the result you want next season use hard data for feedback when you're training and practicing, take notes and log your performances so you can find out if what you are doing is working for you or hindering you. Carry out monthly tests. These can be as simple as stepping on the scales, timing a run or cycle over a set distance or logging your lap times.

Be assured that the most successful riders in the world are using scientific fitness tests using blood to measure their fitness parameters and then using heart rate monitors for their training programs, using nutritionists so that their body is recovering and prepared for the next training session and out on the track measuring the time gap between the fastest and slowest time in the sessions to work out where performance can be increased on the bike.

So do yourself a favour and make a training, practice and racing plan that is measurable. Find out what resources you need and if you don't know how to find them ask someone who does or watch a DVD or read an interview with Villopoto, Carmicheal or Cairoli and ask yourself what would they do in my situation?

Measure your progress and adjust your sh*t if it ain't working because doing the same thing over and over again while expecting different results really is insane!



SHOCKING!

ROBIN GETS TO GRIP WITH THE FLEET'S REAR ENDS AND CARRIES OUT SOME EXPLORATIVE STRIP SEARCHES...

Words by **Rob Bayman** Photos by **Andrew Walch**

What's the point of harnessing all the available power of a bike's motor when as much as 75 per cent of that power goes to waste if your wheels aren't hugging the ground and turning all that torque into forward motion?

We knew that all three bikes would benefit from a suspension service and this applies to anyone who rides any bike with over a season on the clock. The less sensitive may not notice the difference although their lap times would. Many factors make your bike track the ground and many of these are improved by basic maintenance such as swing arm and linkage bearings, tyre condition or the most overlooked of all – correct set up.

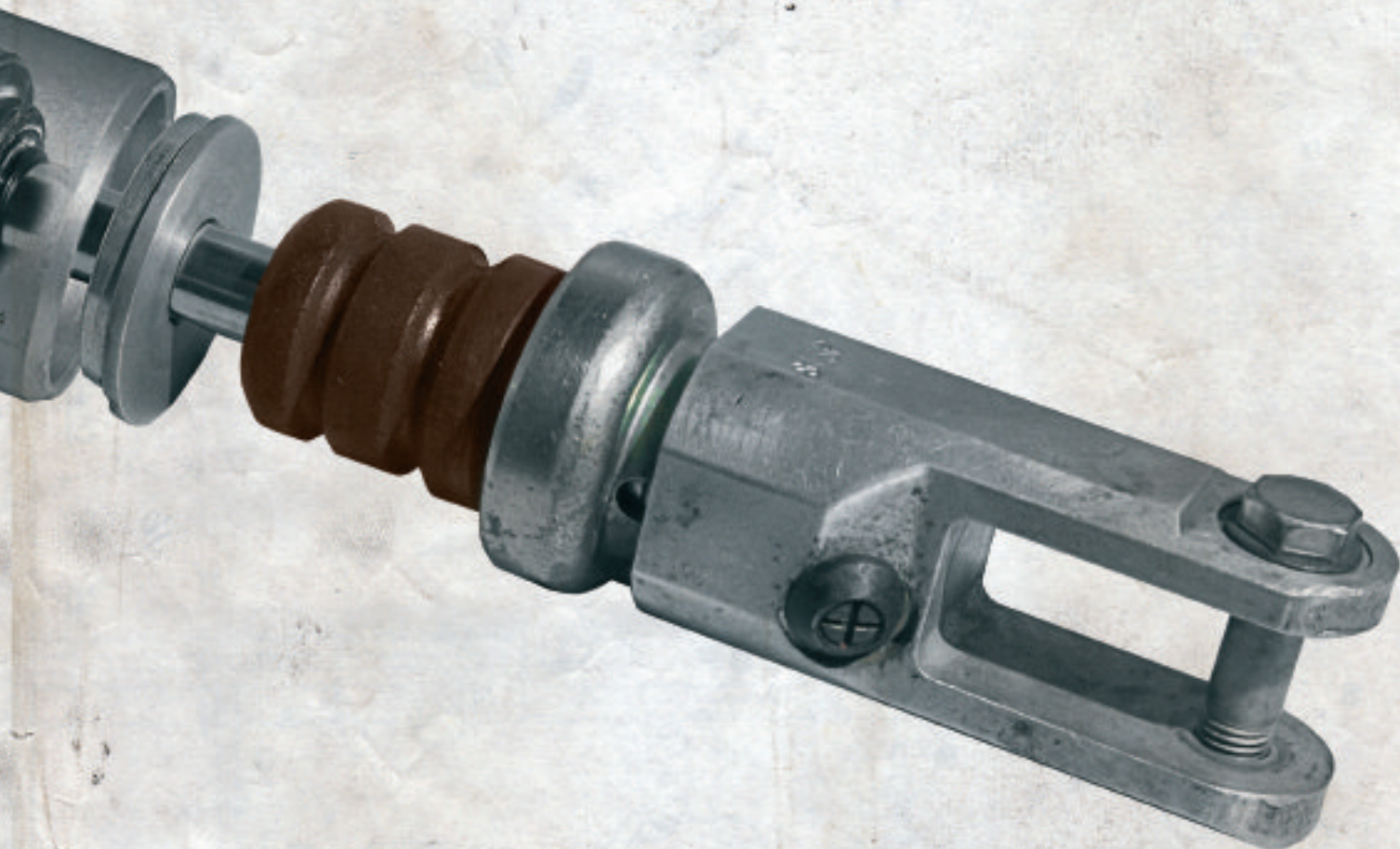
As racing got faster, new skills and

techniques developed, bikes had to meet the requirements of the new breed of racer. It used to be that the fastest way round was with both wheels on the ground yet modern tracks promote the thrills of 'air time' and while many of us wobblers may not hang in the air for the same duration as our heroes the same theories apply and for the time our wheels are on the ground we need traction for forward motion.

Few bikes stray from the primal principles of suspension. We'll leave exotic air shocks to their designers or approved service engineers and focus on conventional nitrogen charged, oil filled shock absorbers. The little Yam and the KX-F share near identical systems while the KTM has the White Power PDS system. The initials PDS simply stand for Progressive Damping System where the rising rate of

resistance is governed from within the shock absorber replacing the arrangement of dog bones and pivot cranks we refer to as linkages.

For years I considered the PDS as technical genius through its simplicity in external action, though owners grumbled of anomalies in the riding experience. The system has two pistons on the same shaft, one for high speed and the other for low speed damping as the shock absorber compresses, a taper needle fixed within the shock absorber body gradually blocks the route of oil in the low speed circuit until totally dependent on the fast speed circuit which is where it becomes progressive. I have to acknowledge the sceptics were probably right as KTM themselves have moved away from that technology and progressed to a linkage.



Although modern shock absorber oil is extremely tolerant to the cyclic changes and torturous temperatures generated through being rapidly forced between labyrinths of shim stacks we have to accept that it will still break down and it needs refreshing from time to time. A shock absorber only holds about a cupful of oil and cushions every landing and soaks up every bump with every movement of the bike's rear end as it covers rough terrain so you have to accept the oil will be past its best after a season's riding.

Along with the oil items like the piston, anti bottoming cushion, adjustable valve unit and a bladder charged with 145psi of nitrogen also share space within the shock body. It's quite normal for the bladder to gradually deflate over time in much the same way a tyre does and

free space is taken up with stagnant moisture laden air. If you've not already had it done then a shock service has to be high on the agenda.

Okay, so I guess you've got the message now so understanding what it does is important to fully understand the need to keep it in tip-top condition. Think of the shock absorber as a bicycle pump filling a football with oil instead of air. As the pump compresses to transfer the oil from in front of the piston the oil travels from the pump into the ball, then if the ball is squeezed the oil will flow back into the pump pushing the piston back as it moves from one chamber to another. Okay it's not quite as simple as that but your halfway there.

Now consider if the pump were pushed harder than the connecting pipe would allow oil to flow from the pump to the ball. The oil would

seep past the piston then likewise as the pump is pulled outwards the oil would try to make its way back. Now we're a bit closer but to add complication, imagine the ball had an inflated balloon within it, the oil entering the ball would collapse the balloon and pressurise the ball. The pump, if relieved of pressure, would allow the oil held within the ball to force the oil back into the pump. That is as simple as I can explain the theory of a shock absorbers action and if you were able to follow it you're 99 per cent appreciative of the function.

Now add a flow valve to restrict the rate of oil flow between the pump and the ball, when compressing the pump quickly, even more oil would force itself behind the piston as a route of less resistance. The piston in a bicycle pump may be solid, whereas the pistons in >>

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Life Without Limitations



KTM



our shock absorbers are designed to allow oil to pass. In reality, the compression adjustment control at the top of the shock absorber body is the controllable restriction, governing how much oil can pass in relation to the stroke of the shock absorber. The rebound is slightly different as we can change the rate of flow through external adjustment at the base of the shock absorber.

Study the photograph of the internal workings of the shock absorber, the black bladder in the piggy back is the balloon in our example, filled with nitrogen to provide rebound pressure, the compression clicker at the top of the shock absorber is the flow valve and the piston is what we referred to as a cycle pump.

We knew the RPM fleet were all in need of service – if not from use, just time alone would take its toll on the volume of oil and pressure of gas required to deliver the smoothest ride possible. The KTM was treated to a full re-valve by Pro Action back when it was new but still needs to be serviced. We can do the servicing ourselves so are fortunate enough to be able to do it without sending it to a specialist and if a shock absorber is clean and in general good condition mechanically, the job can be completed within an hour.

The parts that wear on a shock absorber are simple to replace but the enemy is water. Any pitting in the shaft will let oil out and consequently let water in. Water sitting on the chrome parts will eventually turn to rust then disrupt the silky smooth finish and let oil seep out of the shock, the space vacated of oil can be replaced by two things, water or air, the worst of that is if it is air, you get condensation or

emulsified oil which worsens the problem as air bubbles will expand as the shock absorber heats up and that can actually lock the shock absorber.

While the KTM has been done the remaining duo are believed to be still on the original oil and gas. Stripped and cleaned they can be rebuilt and have fresh contents without much trouble but a warning to those that try to tamper with their shock absorbers, dangerous pressures exist and don't even dream about seeing how much pressure remains in the bladder with a tyre gauge. The little hiss you hear when you put your gauge on or off will release about 50 per cent of the gas and the shock won't ever be right until it is recharged.

We have debated long and hard about gas or air in the shock absorbers taking into consideration flash points, pressures, the dangers of the volatile cocktail of grease when it is mixed with compressed air, then the condensation formed from the temperature changes of the shock body and came to the conclusion that the materials within the shock absorber were designed to work with the inert gas – nitrogen. The term inert means nothing changes the condition of the gas – or it does not react with anything – that said it does react with life as it will kill you if inhaled.

After a full clean and dry off with a blow gun, assembly is simple enough. As many manuals say, follow the reverse procedure of the strip with the shock being rebuilt completely with the exception of the compression adjuster valve for filling with oil. The bladder needs to be pulled as far out as possible against the retaining snap ring then filled with 2.5wt shock oil at the point

where your adjuster clickers locate.

Bleeding is tiresome as continual pumping of the piston by hand is required without dropping the level low enough to cavitate or suck air until all froth and bubbles have gone. Then screw in the compression adjuster to seal the shock absorber body before charging with nitrogen. The tooling to charge shock absorbers is simple enough, it allows the Schrader valve to be pressed and released with pressure in the line, leaving the valve in a closed position when the filling station is removed.

For the fleet we have gone to extremes and blasted the Kawasaki and Yamaha springs to base metal then powder coated them making both our shock absorbers every bit as good as new. The KTM on the other hand will just get fresh oil and a new charge of gas.

Servicing a shocker yourself is not recommended but unless replacement parts are needed you should only expect to pay between £50 and £100 for a shock service.



WHO IS ROB BAYMAN?

Spannerman to Neil Prince, Jon Barfoot and Steve McMillan in Brit MX and GP's. International support to HRC developer Takayuki Miyouchi and US SX star Ricky Ryan. DBR tester and contributor since '97.



★ THREE NIGHTS ★ IN PARIS!

INTREPID INTERNATIONAL TRAVELLER
DAVID BULMER SPENDS A DIRTY WEEKEND
IN THE FRENCH CAPITAL SOAKING UP
ALL THE ATMOSPHERE OF
EUROPE'S #1 SX EVENT...

Words by David Bulmer Photos by Christophe Desmet, Simon Cudby and David Bulmer







Good starts are important inside the tight arena

Paris – the city of love. Home to the Eiffel Tower, the Champs Elysees, Arc de Triomphe and for one long weekend of the year – the Bercy Supercross. Celebrating its 30th year, Bercy is as much a fixture of the motocross/supercross calendar as the Motocross des Nations or Anaheim 1 and it's certainly no less extravagant. From the lavish light shows to the rider introductions to the dancing girls to the freestylers – everything about the evening's entertainment is to make it the best show possible and they do one hell of a job.

This is actually the first time I've attended Bercy but it's always been in the back of my mind to make the short trip over – or under – La Manche and hit up the crown jewel of the European supercross calendar. Living in the south-east, Paris is less distance away than Liverpool and with the ease of the channel tunnel you can actually get from Folkestone to Paris in under four hours using the excellent if expensive toll roads – it's quicker if you're travelling with someone as well so you don't have to get out of the car at every single toll booth. Of course, there's also the Eurostar which makes things even easier and really should dispense any excuses of

logistics or it being too far away.

Once there it really would be a shame to head straight to Bercy Stadium and not see anything of the city because let's face it it's an amazing place. It's also the perfect motocross weekend for couples with the ability to switch between shopping, romantic dinners and dirt bikes at the drop of a gate.

Being on my own I concentrated on the sightseeing aspect and took a leisurely stroll up the Seine seeing the Louvre, Notre Dame, Place des Invalides, the Eiffel Tower, Arc de Triomphe and a bit of the Champs Elysees before getting the train back to the stadium. A long walk but if you haven't been back to the city since a Year 11 school-trip then it's well worth it.

The stadium itself is a bit of a weird building. From the outside it looks like a mix between an art gallery and a bunch of bowling greens stuck at weird angles but then you have to remember you're in Paris and to be honest its unique look is pretty cool. Inside it's your typical arena with a capacity of up to 17,000 fans and when something exciting like the Supercross is taking place those fans make the noise of 50,000 – especially if one of the French riders takes the lead.



Remi Bizouard was throwing down super sick tricks all weekend



Christophe Pourcel was average on Friday and crashed out on Saturday



Defending champ Kyle Chisholm found things tougher in 2012



ROYAL RUMBLE!

THE SEARCH FOR A NEW KING OF BERCY...

The fight to be 2012 King of Bercy came down to the final couple of laps of the final main event. Jake Weimer had dominated proceedings winning both Friday's and Saturday's mains and all he needed to do was come home one place behind Eli Tomac (who'd gone 2-2) and the crown was his. These two were a level above the rest having cleaned up the Course a l' Americaine (three lots of three lap races, dropping the bottom four riders after each race) and the Superpole (one lap against the clock) between them. Weimer was the firm favourite going into Sunday's main and even with two thirds of the race gone he was in a good position behind Tomac but comfortably ahead of Justin Brayton in third.

However a crash with three laps to go saw Weimer lose that second position and with it, it seemed like his chance at the title was gone. He quickly remounted, charged after Brayton and with just over one lap remaining made the pass that saw Weimer crowned King.

For Tomac it was his second straight runners-up finish and he'll be disappointed he couldn't quite take Weimer on the first couple of days. He definitely had the speed as he swept the Superpole competition each day but something didn't click in the races. Brayton rounded off the podium with 3-3-3 results.

Former King, Kyle Chisholm injured himself on the final day after running 4-4 which left Cedric Soubeyras in fourth spot overall. Crowd favourite Gregory Aranda struggled with crashes all weekend while Christophe Pourcel ruptured a spleen on Saturday night after a bad crash coming out of the whoops. However, even before that he looked a shadow of his former self and there are even more question marks about his return after this latest injury setback.

In the returning 250 class Josse Sallefranque took the victory over heavily fancied Valentin Teillet who couldn't recover from a 14th place finish in the second of their six races. Teillet would win four races but Sallefranque's 3-1-1-2-2-5 scorecard was enough to take the Prince of Bercy title. Lone American, Tyler Villopoto was looking good until a crash in the fourth race left him with a broken kneecap and out of the competition.

★ ★ ★

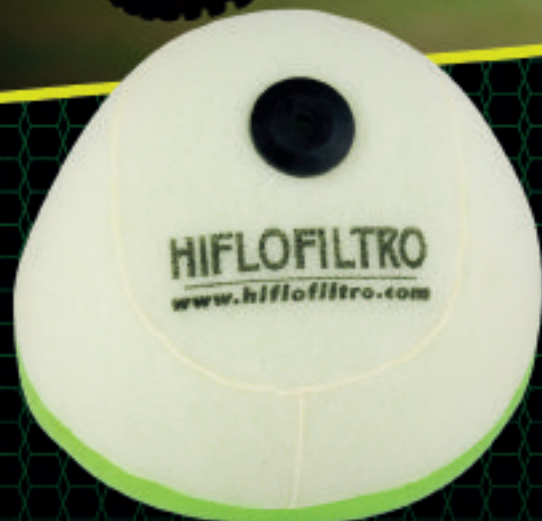
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The pits require a special pass but once in all the riders are in plain view. There are no factory rigs to use as refuge or personal motorhomes to hide in, just metal fences to mark out their team pit area. As a result everyone is a lot more relaxed with the riders chatting amongst themselves and swapping between their respective pit areas to check out the new equipment/bikes that a lot of riders were making some of their first appearances on.

As well as being able to check out the pits if you got there early enough you could catch all the riders practising from whatever location you wanted. Not everyone can spend 12 hours at a supercross race though so the hardcore fans could hang over the railings without the backlash from those sitting behind them. Not that that actually stopped some of the fans during the main show – especially the Gregory Aranda fan club that had the chainsaws revving throughout.

In what I later discovered was the norm at Bercy the opening ceremonies started about 15 minutes late with the show eventually finishing about one hour after the scheduled ending. Obviously you can leave early and miss the last freestyle performance but I don't think a single person did. In America freestyle is used as a filler between races and if they put it at the end the riders would be doing tricks to an empty venue but here at Bercy everyone stayed right until the death and cheered some ridiculous whips, backflips and everything in between. In fact you could argue that the FMX rider list actually eclipsed the SX riders as Tom Pages, Edgar Torronteras, Taka Higashino, Remi Bizouard and more took to the stage. >>

Eli Tomac's butt patch!

Tyler Villopoto shows great speed until cracking a knee cap!

The French fans love a little FMX action



Justin Brayton rounded out the Bercy podium

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CHANNEL HOPPER!

JACK BRUNELL'S THE SOLE BRIT RACING IN BERCY...

Despite the near proximity of Bercy to the British Isles only one solitary British rider was in the starting line up in either of the two classes. An air-conditioning engineer by trade, Jack Brunell is also one the best supercross riders in England and thanks to Philip Coulter from Alias MX and his excellent results in the German ADAC supercross series – where he's been crowned Prince of both Stuttgart and Munich – he managed to get an invite to the 30th edition of this prestigious event. We interrupted Jack's lunch break to bring you this interview where he talked about his weekend and his future plans...

DBR: So how did you get the invite to race Bercy – it's quite an exclusive list?

JB: "I've raced supercross for years and I've done the German ADAC championships and I've won their 250 championship. Last year I sat at home watching Bercy and one of my sponsors – Philip Coulter from Alias – said we should be there because it's the one we need to do. Philip tried getting me in by contacting Xavier Audouard who's the main

guy here and we managed to get in as a reserve when someone got injured in the week."

DBR: How did the weekend go for you?

JB: "Friday was terrible – I was so scared. I don't know whether it was nerves or just being scared. I just rode so tight and I couldn't seem to get loose around the track. My dad and everyone was watching me and couldn't believe how bad I was doing. I felt like I was trying my hardest but I think I was trying too hard so just not flowing enough. It was also my first big supercross of the year and I haven't practised at all because the weather has been so bad in England. It wasn't a very good weekend results wise but I felt I'd made a lot of progress from Friday to Sunday with the speed and getting comfortable on a bike and supercross track again. Not a good weekend in terms of results but good experience to ride against that quality of opposition though."

DBR: What were you hoping to achieve considering your lack of practice and the quality of riders?

JB: "My goal was to make the final and if I'd done that I'd have been so happy but that's racing and hopefully I'll get another chance next year to do it."

DBR: What are your plans for the rest of the winter?

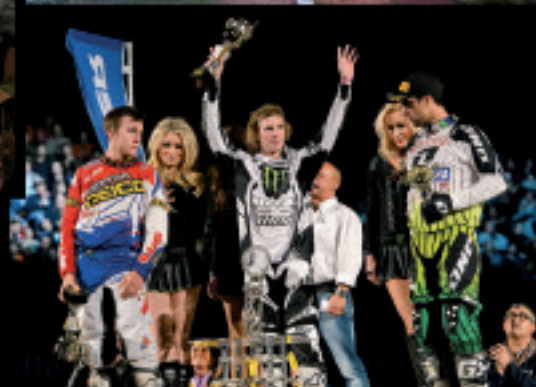
JB: "I've got a race in Geneva in a couple of weekends time but it's the same weekend as one of the German races so I'm waiting to hear back from the promoters to find out if I can get a spot. If not I'll be in Germany doing their championship and then I think a few weeks after that one there's one in Munich which is a really good one so I'll do that. Then the British indoor races start straight after Christmas so I've got two races in England then I go to do one in Holland before I come back to finish off the British series. I love doing supercross, the atmosphere, being inside in the warm, don't have to clean the bike every time you ride – I just really enjoy it. I think my style suits supercross quite well and I find it quite easy if you know what I mean. The biggest trouble is there's nowhere to practice and that makes it tough."



Bonjour!



Brunell just missed out on the mains



Not that the SX rider list was lacking in quality, it's just that there were no 'superstars' in attendance with Eli Tomac, Jake Weimer, Kyle Chisholm (the returning King), Justin Brayton and Wil Hahn making up the American contingent. All of them are extremely talented riders but none have the X-factor of someone like Barcia, Stewart, Villopoto or Dungey.

This meant the main focus for the French fans was the return of Christophe Pourcel who was riding a KTM. He even got his own solo entrance in the opening ceremonies, riding around on his own while the American riders were dropped from the roof and the other French guys were driven in on trucks. Unfortunately his riding didn't live up to the entrance but that's about the only part of the nights' entertainment that didn't.

In total you got 10 races plus probably the most exciting event – the Superpole. Quite simply it's one lap against the clock with the riders going on in processional order, fastest rider at the end. As fewer and fewer guys are left the tension gets higher and the volumes raises considerably until the crescendo as the final rider takes to the track. The lap times are above 40 seconds which is impressive in such a small arena and the action comes thick and fast. Despite finishing well behind schedule the time flies by and a night – or three – at the Bercy SX is an excellent evening's entertainment.



THREE NIGHTS



RAGING BULLS!

HONDA MADE A CLEAN SWEEP OF THE RED BULL PRO NATIONALS WITH THE EVO-TECH STEVENS AND BUILDBASE TEAMS SO WE SENT ED BRADLEY TO FIND OUT EXACTLY WHAT IT IS THAT MAKES THEIR BIKES RED HOT...

WORDS BY ED BRADLEY PHOTOS BY NUNO LARANJEIRA

Winning a championship requires training, mental toughness, teamwork and a great bike that continually finishes races because to finish first, first you have to finish. That's exactly what both Nev Bradshaw and Nico Aubin managed to achieve in the 2012 Red Bull Pro

Nationals. Nevsta had an incredible year and was never off the podium all season long with three wins, one second and two third overalls while Nico was just a little short of Nevsta with three wins and two thirds but the diddy Frenchman just missed the podium at the other with a fourth overall!

After the dust had settled from the final round at Culham Moto Parc we got the chance to take both championship winning machines – that's Evo-Tech's cracking CRF250 Honda and Buildbase's blazing CRF450 Honda – for a blast around the Apex circuit. The track was a little wet and fairly heavy going so it

would be a real test of both bikes.

Evo-Tech have been busy with their bike spending a lot of time using their own knowledge and resources with both the suspension and the motor. Evo-Tech motors have always been quite popular and with great success too. When the guys pulled the 250F of out the van, the bike glistened and shined like a new one so I asked Evo-Tech head honcho Matt Hutchins how many hours the bike had done. "About nine," he said. "We've made a habit of changing the bikes every 10 hours or so – that way Neville has a bike that's tight and feels fresh every time he gets on it."

With no free machinery from Honda the team buy all their own bikes which just shows the level of commitment they have in giving their riders the best opportunity for winning.

The bike looks ice cool – I think it's one of the best looking bikes in the UK pits. The black tyres and rims, dark skid plate and clutch cover keep the bottom half of the bike dark and then a white >>





*Ed and the Buildbase
450 shred up an Apex
hill like it ain't even there*



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ALTERNATIVE VIEW!

GETTING BEHIND NEV'S BARS WITH LUCKY LUKE WILLIAMS...

As well as letting Ed loose on Nev Bradshaw's Evo-Tech Honda we sent 14-year-old schoolboy Luke Williams along to Apex n'all so he could share his thoughts on the RBPN MX2 championship winning wheels. Here's what the speedy youngster had to say...

"When initially sitting on Nev's bike I noticed he had Renthal bars with a lot of back sweep and because I'm tall they felt quite low. He has his levers almost parallel with the bars which felt nice and overall the bike was very comfortable to sit on.

"Out on the track the front brake was nice and sharp with a lot of stopping power – it worked really well when going through the deep ruts if I needed to slow down. The rear brake was also strong with a lot of stopping power but you had to push down quite far for it to lock up. This was a good thing because it stopped me from locking the wheel and stalling the motor.

"The front forks were perfect for me and went over the bumps like there was nothing there. They had a real plush movement which made me feel real comfortable when landing from the jumps. The rear shock allowed great traction and never slid out throughout the day. Also I never got a kick over the downhill braking bumps which really made me feel comfortable to race into the corners! In the corners the

suspension allowed the bike to sit in the ruts well so you could put the power on nice and strong.

"The clutch was nice but took a lot of getting used to because I normally ride with a Magura hydraulic clutch is set up so it works at the very end of the lever travel but on Nev's it has to be pulled in between three quarters and half to disengage the power! But it's good and very light once you get used to it!

"The engine was real fast at the bottom and torquey but I felt I had to rev it like a two-stroke otherwise it didn't really feel like the bike was moving quickly! On the second outing we changed the ignition setting which made a lot of difference and it made the bike even stronger at the bottom which made it easy to get the revs up and power through the deep Apex woodchip. Also the gearbox was really light so you could barely tell whether you had knocked it up another gear – until I twisted the throttle!

"There were some really cool bits on the 250 like the Acerbis foot peg covers which stopped woodchip sticking in them. Also the bike had a really trick looking seat cover which had plastic bits on top. It was okay to ride with in the dry but if it was wet I can imagine it being very slippery!

"All in all the bike was awesome and was really enjoyable to ride and I would have taken it home if I had had the chance."



bike

stripe flows through and out towards the back brightening up the top half. It's almost like a go faster stripe and of course this bike must go fast because it has the red plate on it!

Along with the awesome graphics the bike is fitted with an oversized Braking front disc, a large capacity aluminium fuel tank, HGS exhaust system, Haan wheels, Raptor foot pegs and weirdly Renthal full soft, flat grips – weirdly for me because I haven't seen anyone using them for a long time!

Sitting on the bike the layout feels great. The handlebars are quite high as is the rear brake pedal but the gear lever is in a comfortable position. The clutch and front brake lever are in quite a neutral position too – not too high and not too low.

On the stand the engine is free revving and very responsive with quite a deep exhaust note to it so as soon as it was warmed up it was time to get this caged animal out of the pits and on to the track.

My first reaction to this bike is that it is really easy to ride. The suspension was plush and progressive through the stroke. The back end sat down well driving out of corners yet soaked up braking bumps and the bottom of jump faces without bottoming out. Nev has the forks set up quite hard and riding high in the stroke but this didn't effect the compression. It meant that it was easy to control and guide the bike through the long ruts and it soaked up braking bumps really well which encouraged me to hit them faster knowing that the bike would remain stable and I could maintain my line on the track. Yet in the turns it was easy to feed the bike into the ruts and lean the bike right over making it really easy to turn.

The bike itself felt light and there was no problem hopping across from one rut to another along the straights, partly due to the suspension and partly due to the fact that it's a light 250F and compared to a 450 feels like a BMX to throw around.

The motor on this bike is the nuts! Matt was telling me that Nevsta likes to thrash the expletives off this bike and you really can rev this bike hard! When I could hear the fluttering of the rev limiter I hucked another gear and let it continue ripping up the hill. Not being a fan of rev limiters I started using the bottom-end grunt and this machine churns out plenty of torque at the low-end. I couldn't believe how this bike pulled me out of turns with the amount of drive that it did.

What really blew me away afterwards when I was discussing the motor with Matt



Lucky Luke lays it down in an Apex left hander...





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was the fluttering I was experiencing which I thought was the rev limiter turned out to actually be reverberation from the silencer end cap – I still had maybe another 500rpm to go before the limiter properly kicked in. While you can rev this bike and have it produce good power there's loads of low-end power too so it was possible to pull high gears at any time. In a nutshell this bike looks cool and is cool to ride.

The lord in the MX1 ring is the Frenchman Frodo – sorry, Nico! Aubin's only a little guy and his bike is set-up to suit that. The Buildbase team use the standard suspension units front and rear which is set up internally by Willy Verstrepen at WV2 while the motor is just finely tuned to make it a sweet performing machine so Frodo can keep his feet on the pegs!

The bike shares similarities with the Evo-Tech MX2 machine. It uses an oversized front brake disc and aluminium fuel tank, black Excel rims – although these are spoked to Talon hubs on this bike – and then there's another pair a Renthal full soft, flat grips – maybe I'm missing a trick here because both RBPN champions are using the same grips. The engine lets its gasses out through a S7 DEP system.

If I'm going to give Nico the nickname of Frodo then I'm in line for being called Gandalf!

As soon as you sit on the bike you realise that the Buildbase team have removed the seat foam and replaced it with a breezeblock – this seat is rock hard – and it feels weird to sit on – as Gandalf! The handlebars are low, flat and bend back quite a bit with the levers being low down too. The rear brake and gear lever felt just right.

Once again as soon as the bike was warmed up it was time to take to the track to frolic around on Frodo's bike. This bike is super-stable and uber-easy to ride and the power delivery is brilliant. There's loads of torque, bottom-end power that isn't arm wrenching – it's lazy and soft even though there is lots of it. The way it delivers its power is great for the long, soft, heavy ruts that we were riding. Just open the throttle a little and the bike picks up speed as you guide it through the turns which makes it easy to ride fast without a great deal of effort...

It's easy to carry speed in the turns, the bottom-end power walks in to the mid-range blandly, almost without recognition until you hit the top-end which is when the bike reawakens and blasts off with a hold tight and scream if you wanna go faster type of power. It's great to be able to ride a bike that is strong in the low-end as well as in the top-end too! Just when I was thinking of hucking another gear the surge

would hit and the bike would come alive. I can imagine this bike being great on all tracks.

For a 450, the suspension – especially the shock – made the bike feel light and nimble. I found it effortless to hop and skip over bumps almost like you would on a two-stroke. While the shock spring might be just right for Frodo for Gandalf the foot pegs were often dragging low through the ruts and places where I would have hard hits.

The rebound was great and was fast so loading the suspension and then lifting the bike with an extra squirt of the throttle had me hopping from one line to another with a big smile on my face. Even though the rebound feels fast the last part of the stroke isn't so quick and there's no topping out or surprising swaps which would make your own backend twitch! The forks were very similar to Neville Bradshaw's in the way that they were firm and plush. These forks gave great feedback from under the tyre and sat a little lower compared to the MX2 machine.

Match it up all together and you get a really stable, fun to ride bike that is far less physically challenging to ride than a standard machine which is great because Nuno the photographer had me doing lap after lap after lap after...



Nev's cockpit was easier for big boy Bradley to squeeze into than Nico's



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JEFFREY HERLINGS

THE NEWLY CROWNED MX2 WORLD CHAMP GETS GRILLED BY YOU GUYS...

Interview by JP O'Connell Photo by Ray Archer/ktmimages.com

Q: What age did you first start riding and were you always much faster than everyone else?

Alan Davies, Welshpool

A: "I started riding a motorcycle when I was five years old and I always raced older people to be honest. I was riding 85cc Big Wheel when I was 10 and was racing guys who were maybe 15 and 16. I was always good on the small bikes but not a great rider and was always battling even at the local races. I could never have dreamed of reaching the level that I have now!"

Q: Are you recognised in the street when you're at home in Holland?

Tim Clarke, Guildford

A: "I'd say that within 15 km of my house then everyone will recognise me and sometimes even when I go to big cities I will be recognised and I'll hear people saying "hey there's Herlings, he's a motocross rider – I've seen him on TV". People will come up and chat and ask how things are going so it's pretty cool."

Q: What would be your top three tips for riding the sand?

Ryan Allcock, Chester

A: "First of all stay away from the clutch as you'll break your bike, secondly stand up as much as you can and thirdly just be smooth and follow the lines. It's completely different to riding hardpack tracks so stay fluid and stay smooth."

Q: Would you be happy to spend your career racing in the world championship or are you set to follow Roczen to the States?

Steve Wiggins, Rochdale

A: "Well I will be racing 2013 in the MX2 class here in Europe and 2014 will be the last year on my KTM contract so I've got an option to go to America and I'm interested in doing that. I need to see where I am in a year's time. So many things can happen in life but as I said I'd be really interested to race in America as it's always been a dream to race SX. If you're doing good in front of 50,000 fans then it's even better."

Q: If you could pick any five other riders from throughout history to race against at Lierop who would they be?

Ben Evans, Llanelli

A: "I would love to battle with Villopoto, Carmichael, Everts, Stewart and Baggett. I just want to take these top five riders, even Stefan, I would love to beat him at Lierop – he wouldn't be so happy with that!"

Q: Is there any animosity between you and Tommy and if so is it restricted to the track?

Dave Watts, Worthing

A: "It's all on the track I think, we're both racing for the same goal. I'm racing to win and he's racing to win so we both do our own thing and I always hope to come out on top. That's what I'm working for, that's what I'm training for every day. Okay so away from the track we're not real good friends but that's normal when you're both racing for one goal and you put all of your life towards that one thing."

Q: Having landed the MX2 title this season will you stay in MX2 to defend it or are you already looking at moving to MX1?

Lee Habbishow, Stroud

A: "Honestly I would like to spend another three or four more years in the MX2 class in Europe but you know I'm only 17 and having won the championship I only get to defend it once. I'm not so pumped on that rule but we all have to respect it so come 2014 I will either be riding MX1 in Europe or MX2 in America."

Q: Do you spend as much time practicing on hardpack as you do in the sand?

Clive Andrews, Clydebank

A: "The last three years that I have been with Factory KTM I have done 75 per cent of my training on hardpack tracks because that was my weak point. In my first year when I was 15 the second GP was at Valkenswaard and I think I won by maybe 30 seconds then we moved onto Bellpuig and I was losing something like two

seconds a lap to everyone! Now after all of that hard work over the last three years I can see it really paying off and I can even win on hardpack tracks. I am really working hard to be an all round rider and be good at any track."

Q: At the GP of the Netherlands this year your times would have had you winning the MX1 races. Would you say that in the sand it's more technique than horsepower?

Rick Haldwell, Burton-upon-Trent

A: "Well it's both you know, especially when you race somewhere like Lommel. It's beneficial being on a 450 but you have to be in better shape to ride a 450 for 40 minutes than you do a 250. I think that if you're in good shape you can be two seconds a lap quicker on a MX1 bike. At Valkenswaard this year I was riding really good and won both motos by almost a minute – I think that if I'd been on an MX1 bike I could have battled Tony there."

Q: Is there a race you've been in that stands head and shoulders above the rest for you?

Euan Martin, Halifax

A: "I think it was the first year that I rode at Valkenswaard as I didn't know what to expect. It was only my second GP ever, it was my home GP and I went there with no idea of what to expect and I ended up winning by 30 seconds – I felt like I was the king of the world. The track was prepared perfectly, it was nice and sunny and it's one that I'll remember for ever."

Q: Are you superstitious when racing? Do you wear the same pants or put your gear on in a particular order?

Toby Martin, Gloucester

A: "No, I used to, I used to think I had to eat at this time, do this at that time and nothing would happen to me – until I dislocated my shoulder! After that I thought what the hell and started doing what I wanted when I wanted. For the last two years I've been superstition free!"

AX MEN!

GET YOURSELVES NICE AND COMFY AS A BRAND-NEW SERIES PREMIERES IN THE NEW YEAR AND WE'RE NOT TALKING ABOUT WOODSMEN — THIS IS ALL ABOUT ARENACROSS, BABY...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY SUTTY

If you like sitting back in a comfy seat and watching red hot action unfold in front of your very eyes then there's somewhere you need to be in the New Year. Actually, scratch that because there are four places that you need to be in the New Year — London, Belfast, Birmingham and Liverpool.

For four weekends through January and February E22 Sports' Arenacross series is gonna speed from city to city and thrill huge crowds inside the best arenas around as 24 of the UK's fastest motocross stars, a plethora of talented youth racers and a handful of dirt bike jumping daredevils are gonna work together to bring you the very

best show on two wheels!

In the open Pro division no fewer than three current British champions will line up to try and claim the biggest share of the £50,000 prize fund! HM Plant KTM UK's MX2 champion Elliott Banks-Browne is a bit of an unknown indoors but as a leading contender anytime and anywhere he lines up behind a start gate he has to be considered a threat to win.

"I've never really done a series of SX or Arenacross so I'm looking forward to it," says EBB. "I think I have as good a chance as anyone. I'm not going to put myself on the start line unless I'm there to win."

He won't have it easy though as

>>

Gordon Crockard will be one of the few 450 pilots





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As well as a stack of top race action from the UK's leading pro and youth racers, a line up of the loopiest free range – sorry I meant freestyle – motocross riders around will be heading to the four tour stops to put on a show that will blow your mind! FMX legends Andre Villa, Edgar Torrenteras, Chris Birch and Jamie Squibb are just some of the riders who'll be throwing down tricks in London, Belfast, Birmingham and Liverpool so come check 'em out!

TRACK CHAT!

THE LOWDOWN ON
THE HOEDOWN...

While we know exactly which venues the series is hitting up we can't be sure what the tracks inside are gonna look like until we get there because unlike the AMA Supercross series where track maps are released way in advance it's all a bit hush-hush on this championship's layout front. Here's what we do know though...

American course sculpting legends Dirt Wurx USA will be building all four tracks. These boys seriously know how to get the very best from tight arena floors so we're definitely in for a treat. One unique twist for this series will be the inclusion of super wide steel FMX-style take-off ramps for the finish line jump which will pop the racers high into the air. The smooth surface will also make it super easy for racers to whip or scrub their way over the finish line which could make for some very interesting and close finishes. As an added bonus the tracks at the opening two rounds in London and Belfast will head outside of the arena to add a Bercy-esque twist to proceedings.

defending British supercross champs Nev Bradshaw and Tom Church will be looking to claim the title for themselves. For TC the 2013 Arenacross championship could well be his last hurrah as the SR75 World Team rider is coming out of retirement for a shot at glory on some finely-tuned Geoff Walker prepped KTM UK machinery. Can he add an Arenacross title to the supercross one he fought so hard for last winter?

"I really want to," says Tom. "It was tough last year but I managed to do it and it will be even tougher this year with the line-up but we'll see. I started training again about a month ago and I'm really enjoying it. I can't wait to put the SR75

World Team KTM on the top step of the podium."

While TC won the Open class in last winter's indoor series Bradshaw won the 250F division and he's peachy keen to add another title to the Pro Nationals one he clinched in the summer. Back with DB Racing after a three year break the South African speedster is sure to feature at the front in all four rounds.

"It's gonna be sweet," reckons Nev. "Everyone's with their new team on their new bikes and fresh and ready to race. I can't wait!" Also ready to race will be Buildbase Honda's hired gun Adam Chatfield and Euro SX specialist Jack Brunell who are both bound to feature at

the sharp end. As should elder statesman and former MX and SX champ Gordon Crockard who'll be one of the few riders racing a 450 indoors this winter. "A 450 is no advantage on an Arenacross track," claims Crockard. "There's just no way you can use the extra horsepower of a 450 on the compact, jump-filled tight tracks."

The series kicks off at London's O2 Arena on January 12 then moves to Belfast's Odyssey Arena on January 19 before re-crossing the Irish Sea to Birmingham's LG Arena on February 2. The series signs off with a special matinee at Liverpool's Echo Arena on February 10. For ticket info visit www.arenacrossuk.com.



Nev Bradshaw's the other
reigning supercross champ



Adam Chatfield brings some
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BOMB THREAT!

TWO-TIME WORLD CHAMP STEVE RAMON'S BACK ON A BIKE
AND HEADED OVER HERE TO CHALLENGE FOR THE TWO
BIGGEST TITLES IN UK MOTOCROSS...

WORDS AND PHOTOS BY CHRISTOPHE DESMET

Back in the summer it seemed as though Steve Ramon was completely done with riding and while he was recovering well from his horror crash at the 2011 Belgian GP seemed in no rush to get back on a bike again. But things change and as the two-time world champ's physical condition improved his feelings about riding altered also and before we knew it he was lining up on his Rockstar Suzuki for the Mill Red Bull Pro National where he scored a solid seventh overall with a thrilling third in the second moto – not bad for someone everyone thought had died just over 12 months earlier.

A few outings in the Belgian Nationals proved that most of the old magic was still there and when Dave Thorpe decided he needed someone to ride alongside RBPN champ Nico Aubin in our domestic title chases he went knocking at Steve's door. A deal was done and now Ramon's ready to race full-time in the UK which is a real bonus for Buildbase Honda and also for British motocross and its fans.

We caught up with The Bomb

and his Buildbase Honda during a sand training session in Dunkirk and although he was fighting off man flu seemed in pretty high spirits as we chatted about his comeback, signing for DT and the season ahead...

DBR: It's been a bit over a year since you had your horrible crash in Lommel but now you're back on the bike – how does it feel?

SR: "It feels great! When I started riding again it was a little too early to be honest. I was still in full rehab then and I just wanted to get the feeling on the bike again and had no results in mind. Since then I rode some races and things started to get better and better. I feel things are definitely going in the right direction."

DBR: Was getting back on the bike always on your mind?

SR: "For sure not. For the first few months after the crash riding a dirt bike was no priority. I can't say it didn't bother me any more but the most important for me was getting my normal life back. Once things started to get better, the desire to ride started to get bigger and bigger. Once the doctor told me I could start riding again it didn't take me long to get back on it. I had to be very careful but motocross is a big part of

my life. Being able to walk again and to have a normal life was the most important thing but it did feel good to get on the bike again."

DBR: Are you 100 per cent healed now?

SR: "Actually I'm not. The nerves in my shoulder still hurt a lot at times and also the feeling in my lower right leg is not fully back yet. I'm still in rehab so we're still working on this but I don't know if that will ever disappear. These things don't affect me that much on the bike. It's not that I have extra pain when I ride – it just hurts as much as it does day to day. I will have to see what time brings."

DBR: For 2013 you've signed with Buildbase Honda. That's a bit of a surprise...

SR: "After I rode in Mill I got a phone call from Dave Thorpe. He asked me what my plan for 2013 was but at that time I was still in full rehab and I hadn't thought on next season yet. I started thinking about it and realised that I still wanted to ride some races."

"Getting back to GP level is such a long way so I didn't want that anymore. Originally the plan was just to race some Belgian and international races but it was >>





*Ramon's getting ready
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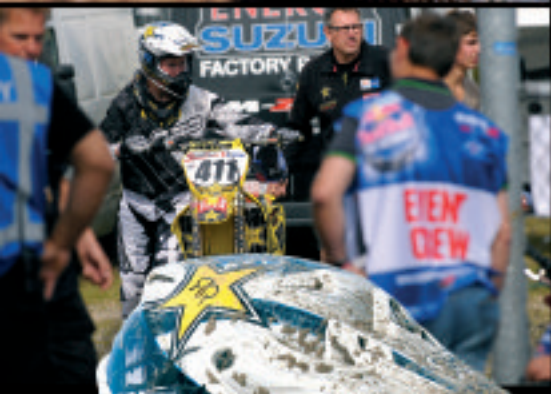
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clear that not many people would be lining up to provide me good support just for these races without doing GPs. This year I was lucky I still had the support from Rockstar Suzuki until the end off the season. They supported me all the way and I'm really thankful for that.

"Thinking on what I wanted for next year is where the Buildbase Honda team came in the picture again. It didn't take long to get the deal sorted. I can imagine some people will be surprised I signed for a British team to ride the British championship but the team is really professional and I feel good with my decision. On top of that riding in England will bring me some new adventures."

DBR: Did you know Dave Thorpe already?

SR: "I know Dave from the races and whenever we met at the track we always said 'hi'. I remember he made me an offer 10 years ago. Back then he had the CAT Honda team in the GPs. It didn't work out then but he finally got me in his team. I know Dave was a great rider back in the day. I remember looking to the television and see him battle with Eric Geboers at the end of the 1980s on their CR500s. He has a lot of experience and I know he does what it takes to run a team properly."



Although he's still getting used to the Honda 450 Ramon's style is still as silky smooth as ever

DBR: Are you looking forward to riding for a new team on a new bike on new tracks?

SR: "I'm really looking forward to it. As for the tracks I only know Hawkstone Park and Desertmartin – which are great venues – but getting to know the other tracks is exciting! I also love the crowd in England. The GPs in England I rode in were always fantastic. British fans are so passionate about the sport and they really go for it. I'm looking forward to feeling that passion again next year at the races."

DBR: Do you like the Honda?

SR: "I haven't ridden the Honda that much yet but I like it a lot. After six years on the factory Suzuki it will take time to adapt to the Honda but so far I've had a lot of fun on it. It's not a factory bike but the whole team is working hard to get the bike as good as possible. We have some test sessions coming up and I'm really looking forward to riding the 2013 bike. Up until now I have only ridden the 2012 bike a couple of times but I really felt good on it."

DBR: What are your plans for next year?

SR: "I will ride the entire Maxxis British championship and the Red Bull Pro Nationals. I really want to ride the Belgian championship if the dates don't clash and do some international races also."

DBR: How about beach races?

SR: "My last race of the year will actually be the beach race at Loon Plages, Dunkirk. Le

Touquet isn't confirmed yet, I will see how I feel and how my physical condition is at the time. I would love to do it but it's a hard race. I love these races because they're so different to regular races. I like riding the beaches, the atmosphere is great and there's not that much pressure to win."

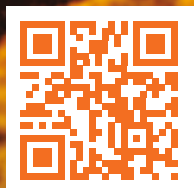
DBR: What's your goal for next year?

SR: "Actually I don't have any goals. The main thing for me is to have fun on the bike but that doesn't mean I will ride around like I don't care in 15th place. I know the field in the British championship and the Red Bull Pro Nationals will be tough and I will try my best but I won't be taking big risks. Anything I achieve now is an extra because when I look back at my career I'm happy. I achieved everything I dreamed off – I was world champion twice, I won the MXdN, was Belgian Champion, won Le Touquet and so on. I will see how things turn out but like I said my main goal is that I want to have fun on the bike."

DBR: Will we ever see you back in a GP?

SR: "You can never say never. If things go really well and I feel I'm ready to do a GP then it's possible. Everything will depend on how the races go for me. Many people ask me if 2013 will be a goodbye season but to be honest I don't know that. For sure I won't race another five years but if next year goes well and I have fun I might just add another season – I will keep taking it one season at a time."

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Dougie Lampkin and the gang
fire into action in Saturday
night's prologue



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Bolts' face shows the strain but he keeps going strong until snapping a chain!



Parts of the course are just damn scary

A t-shirt that's on sale in Lisbon Airport's departure lounge claims that the 'Portuguese do it better'. But is that actually the truth and can you really trust what a t-shirt tells you anyway? It's fair to say that with a bit more planning the Portuguese could probably do better at a whole heap of things but it's improvisation not planning that has always been the nation's specialty...

Although the organizational team behind the Extreme XL do a lot of planning they also have to rely on a lot of improvisation too while running the eighth edition of their hard enduro. With rumours of an Extreme Enduro Championship doing the rounds once again the Portuguese crew was on a mission to show that the EXL is the toughest of them all and needs to be included in the championship. While only time will tell if the world series will actually happen – or if this event will be a part of it – the EXL team definitely achieve their goal of making it the toughest event on the calendar with only three riders finishing the course inside the assigned time before declaring it as one of the worst they'd ever ridden.

The event is based in the village of Quintandona with its narrow streets and buildings made of slate rock. Before Saturday night's Pro Class prologue the local theatre group dress up as demonised creatures, frightening the crowd and riders and offering a warning of what's to come the following day. The prologue is played out under floodlights in front

of thousands of fans and it actually gives a good preview of how the Portuguese public will interact with the riders during Sunday's challenging main event – no rider can complain about a lack of support because they all get it and get it loud!

The EXL's motto is 'O céu acaba aqui' which roughly translates as 'heaven ends here' and there's no doubt that hell is what the racers ride through with constantly technical terrain including river beds, man-made log sections and huge and slippery granite rocks in abundance. To give an idea of how hard the going is a big slice of the course was previously used for the Portuguese round of the World Trial Championship. As though the course wasn't already tough enough race officials regularly pour water down the rocky river sections to make them that bit more slippery...

Obviously foreseeing that this year's race would be a tough one, the EXL team extended the time allowance to finish the race from four hours to six. In those six hours the riders would have to navigate two and a quarter laps of the killer course, covering almost 70kms of pure torture if they were to be classed as finishers.

With Sunday's running order determined by the results of the prologue it's Paul Bolton who sets off first although he soon sees his KTM's chain break which forces him to abandon all hope of finishing. With Bolts out of the running it's Graham Jarvis who takes over at the front. All through the race the difficult

EXL101

FACTS, FIGURES AND FICTION...

The EXL was born in 2003 when Paulo Moreira – who at the time was recovering from injuries to both his arms – got inspiration after watching hard enduro events on the web. As soon as he was able to Paulo gathered a group of friends and started exploring the woods near Lagares for the toughest trails he could find... Local bike retailer Luis Correia came up with the name Extreme XL. It basically means Extreme Extra Large as opposed to a normal length extreme special test found in a timecard enduro... Many of the ideas for new and crazy obstacles come from boozy nights spent in Motorbar and the four-seasons special test was one of them – a pile of logs and leaves for autumn, blocks of ice for the winter, broken mirrors for the summer and a huge pile of grass for the spring... It costs around 12,000 to run the event with almost half of that going towards the prize fund... Without Paulo's friends the event would never happen –all the wood used to construct the obstacles and ramps is given by a friend's local company, all the excavator machines used to build the man-made obstacles are supplied by a friend's communications company, the online live cameras used to broadcast the prologue were lent by a friend's security company, the helicopter used to transport the cameraman during the event was supplied by a friend's aviation company while all the advertising, banners and riders' bibs were supplied by a friend's advertising and marketing company.



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Grimbo makes it look
easy – kind of

lagares extreme

RESULTS

EXTREME XL 2012

- 1 **Graham Jarvis** Husaberg
- 2 **Dougie Lampkin** Gas Gas
- 3 **Alfredo Gomez** Husaberg

No other finishers...



The punishment continues
right to the very end



Jane Daniels
is the event's
leading woman



TMX test pilot Martin
Craven dreams of
coffee and cake



Even world class athletes
like Dougie Lampkin struggle
in the heat at Lagares

obstacles just seem that bit easier to overcome for Grimbo and he's soon pulling clear of the chasing pack. Five hours of hard slog later and Jarvis crosses the finish line.

"I was here two years ago and it was a lot easier back then," says a knackered Jarvis. "I thought this year would be more difficult but I was surprised by how much tougher it actually was! It was a very long day with no rest. Erzberg and Hell's Gate were the hardest events but now Lagares is on a par with them – if not even more difficult. I like all the events if I win! I seem to do better if they're really difficult and there was a lot of pain involved on this one..."

When Dougie Lampkin drags his Gas Gas across the finish 30 minutes later he looks far from happy even though he finishes second. "It was probably the hardest event I've ever done," says the tough-as-nails Yorkshireman. "Riding the bike for five hours is hard with everything being so difficult – my hands are in a mess, my

back hurts, my foot hurts... I didn't really have many mechanical problems but I had a big crash over the handlebars in the river.

"Looking back at everything I'm actually quite happy with the day but it was just too long. It took me three and a half hours last year and I think that it was about right. I know that it's difficult to get the balance right so I hope the organisers can make it a bit easier next year."

The general consensus amongst all the riders is that this event really is just too tough and many experienced extreme enduro riders take the full six hours to complete just the first lap. While that's definitely extreme is it what riders, fans and the organisers really want to see at events like this? While it's certainly a spectacle for the Portuguese fans, how many riders – especially those without trials backgrounds – will want to take on an event like this again? Maybe that t-shirt actually needs to say 'Portuguese, do it better!'

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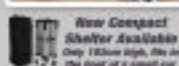
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MIXFACTOR!
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MX FACTOR... **JOEL RIZZI**#912

DOB: 09/12/03 HOMETOWN: RUTHIN, NORTH WALES SPONSORS: FEEHILY MX

As copper bottomed investments go Charlie Heyman is surely an absolute shoe in for an Auto title or two in 2013. In the division above however Joel Rizzi will be laying down a 65cc challenge and I think he has the MX Factor too. Joel's is more of a two year forecast as Team Rizzi has 2014 pencilled in as their main championship chasing season. Joel will be aged 10 in '14 and going for 65cc gold at just the right age – podium finishes are well within his capability in 2013 however.

Joel began racing in 2010 and a year later finished fourth in the GT Cup championship. In 2012 he won the Vale MXC 65cc title. With only five of this year's Red Bull 65cc nationals under his belt there isn't too much form on which to base the Rizzi prediction but as an eight year old he has already mixed it up pretty well with some of the best in the division. At Northern club meetings Joel is quite often seen in the same paddock as Rossi Beard and drawing a comparison with Rossi at a similar age is a pretty fair one I feel and I expect Joel to make the kind of impact and improvement in 2013 that Rossi has shown this last term.

It's also an interesting fact that dad Tino Rizzi appeared on the Rage pages way back in the day – 1989 – as an up and coming youth talent. As far as records show this is only the second time a father and son combo have featured in Rage, quite unbelievably the Rizzis pipped at the post by Taylor and his dad Chris Hammal just last month. So congratulations guys on joining a pretty exclusive club...

Rage: Well done on your first season in the 65s. Although you didn't get a full run at the Nationals you look to have to done well – what have been the standout highlights for you?

JR: "For me my favourite individual races of the year have been my sixth place finish at Canada Heights in the Red Bull series and my performance at the Mallory Park ACU Team Event. I finished fourth overall at Mallory with one bad race. If things had gone better in that one I think I could have got third or even second overall. At the Culham Red Bull round I ended up 10th overall in really muddy conditions – that was a tough weekend and my dad says that was his favourite of the year."

Rage: Do you have a pro trainer and what do you think you need to improve on?

JR: "Dad took me to see Richard-Mike Jones when I started racing and we have stuck with him ever since. I get on really well with Rich – the training sessions he does are fun and I know I learn a lot each time. I need to improve on my starts though and after that just race as fast as I do when I'm practising. I know I can go a lot quicker on race days."

Rage: Tino, I'll give you the last word so tell us what kind of a character is Joel?

TR: "Joel's a very laidback lad with a cool temperament – perfect for racing I reckon. Sometimes if I say we're not going out on the bike he doesn't make a big fuss and sometimes I even think he's actually pleased to have a weekend off because he gets a chance to do something different. Deep down he's utterly determined and committed though and if you ask him straight what he wants to achieve next year he simply says 'I want to win!'"



DUTCH DELIGHT!

BRONZE FOR MEWSE IN DUTCH CHAMPS...

Conrad Mewse claimed third in the Dutch ONK 85cc series despite missing the final round after breaking an arm in a Dunkirk training accident. Luckily for Conrad he had more than enough points in hand following brilliant results in earlier rounds and series bronze was his – Davy Pootjes took the title by a single point ahead of team-mate Bas Vaessen. The arm break is fairly straight forward and we hear and Conrad will be back at it fairly soon.

In Conrad's absence there was still a rousing British interest in Harfsen as Jay Hague rode the wheels off it for sixth overall which was his best result of the year in Holland. Lewis Houghton ended his 85cc days on a high note as he scored seventh overall on the weekend and in the final series standings too...

A broken arm can't stop Conrad from finishing on the podium



Sam Wragg gets a bit wild

WILD CHILD!

NEAR MISS OF THE MONTH...

Youthstream digger driver Justin Barclay worked his magic with a remodelling job on Wilden Lane just before the current winter series kicked off. Sam Wragg also worked a bit of magic on one of the new turns but fortunately saved what would have been a big crash!



MX FACTOR...

CHARLIE HEYMAN #22

DOB: 29/06/05 HOMETOWN: BRINSLEY, NOTTINGHAMSHIRE

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With the 2012 season recorded to the history books it's the perfect time to look forward to 2013 and in particular looking at likely contenders for the titles – essentially the kids with the MX Factor. Almost seven-and-a-half Charlie Heyman is surely one of the youngest – if not the very youngest – talent to appear in Rage. Charlie first hit competitive dirt in July last year – just three days after his sixth birthday – and he claimed three straight wins at the Peterborough Junior MX Club. With just a handful of meetings under his belt it was already becoming obvious to dad Marc that Charlie had the right stuff.

When spring 2012 arrived Charlie was more than keen to have a crack at the Nationals. Dad was a little cautious of the big step up but once there Charlie hit a speedy rhythm straight out of the box – dad need not have worried. Such was the rapid progress a weekend of amazing consistency at Salters Lane in May rewarded six year old Charlie with an overall BYN win.

His first individual race victory came at round three and by the time the ACU season wrapped at Cusces Charlie had emerged as top dog winning four of the six heats. This was obviously no fluke as just a couple of weeks earlier Charlie had routed a bigger and better BSMA field in a similar manner at Mallory Park. From rookie to red hot in double quick time – the prospects really couldn't be any better for this young fella. Rage asked dad Marc to fill us in on a few more details.

Rage: You must be delighted with Charlie's progress so far, what's the plan from here?

MH: "I'm absolutely over the moon with it all so

far. It will be a hard winter spent training in deep sand at FatCat and we will probably compete in the East Kent Winter series too."

Rage: Autos or 65cc bikes next year – have you decided yet?

MH: "Autos for next year. Charlie has played me up big time for a 65 as his mates are moving up. He's just not big enough though and the other guys are a year older than him or more. He's still on tip-toes with a cut down seat on a 50cc and he doesn't even weigh four stone yet!"

Rage: What are the championship goals for next year and competitions entered?

MH: "We will be competing in the BYN and GT Cup again next season and will be charging hard for the titles."

Rage: Has Charlie ever had a professional MX trainer or coach?

MH: No professional training. I asked Charlie not so long ago if he would like some help with riding or training to which he replied I want it to be just me and you for now dad!"

Rage: How did Charlie get interested in MX?

MH: "I think it was from being around my bikes as a toddler – bikes from big road bikes to trials bikes and all bikes in between."

Rage: Aside from motocross what other sports does Charlie like?

MH: "He's a keen trials and BMX rider. He loves riding his OSET at home but keeps breaking them – he's on the third frame now. They're not made for 15 foot doubles!"



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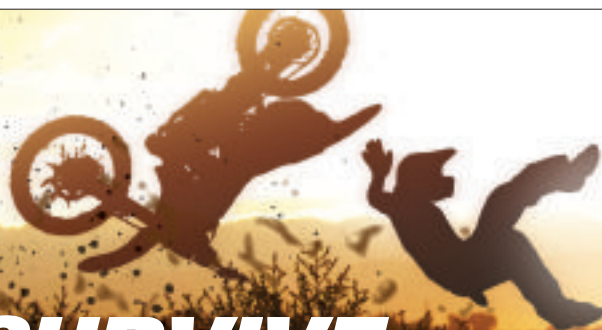
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TOM TOM!

CHAMPIONSHIP CHAT WITH POWERBAND RACING'S TOM GRIMSHAW...

Team Powerband Racing KTM's Tom Grimshaw grabbed a last-gasp victory in the 2012 Red Bull Elite Youth Cup 65cc class at Culham Park in September when the championship chase went down to the wire in dramatic fashion.

Championship leader and team-mate Christopher Mills started the final moto of the season with a solid points advantage but a mechanical DNF left him sidelined and in deteriorating conditions 11-year-old Tom raced to the moto win and the title.

With the move up to a SW85cc machine already sorted for his 2013 Red Bull Elite Youth Cup campaign, Rage caught up with the young Hertfordshire hero for a quick catch-up...

Rage: Tom, first off, congratulations on winning the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup 65cc crown. How does it feel to be champion? Two months down the line are you still buzzing?

TG: "Yes, it's still a great feeling as I'm going to practice tracks and people are still congratulating me on my achievement."

Rage: It was a dramatic conclusion to the series – what was your mindset going into the final moto knowing Christopher virtually had the title in the bag?

TG: "I knew Christopher had a big points lead going into the last moto and my dad just said as it was my last race on a 65 I should just go out,

enjoy myself and whatever happened, happened."

Rage: What was your favourite round of the series and why?

TG: "All the rounds had great racing but Landrake stands out because I qualified first and won all five motos over the weekend."

Rage: Next year you move up to a SW85cc machine – we know you've got one already so what are your first impressions?

TG: "My first impressions are wow! I can go faster on this as not only have I got more power I've got better suspension. Our new team bikes are looking very trick for next season and I cannot wait to start testing them in the New Year."

Rage: What are your goals for next season in the Red Bull Elite Youth Cup?

TG: "It will be tough next year with so many good riders in the SW85cc class. My aim is to finish in the top five and stay consistent over the championship."

Rage: What training – on the bike and in the gym – are you doing over the winter?

TG: "I'll be mixing my riding with gym work over the winter plus I will also be using my trials bike which is great fun. It's important for me to build on my strength and stamina as we have longer races to contend with."

Rage: What are your ultimate goals in motocross?

TG: "I would love to race GPs and then the AMA supercross and motocross series. I do watch a lot of AMA action on DVD and really like the aggressive type of racing. I also want to race my dad at the Farleigh Vets in 2015."

Rage: Away from racing, how do you do at school?

TG: "I've just moved up to secondary school this year and have to work hard to combine homework and training but my school also works with me to ensure I get the balance right."

Rage: Are your non-MX mates aware of how well you've done this year?

TG: "Yes as the local newspaper wrote an article about me winning the Red Bull series and they thought that was really cool."

Rage: How do you relax away from MX?

TG: "I don't understand the question! Ha! Seriously, I like playing with mates at the skatepark and playing other sports."

Rage: Finally, anyone you'd like to thank?

TG: "I would like to thank all my family and friends, the Powerband Racing team and all the associated sponsors who make my racing possible. Also a big thank you to the Red Bull Elite Youth Academy – Matt Bates, David Thorpe, Elliott Banks-Browne and Jake Nicholls."

GOT A STORY FOR RAGE?

THEN CONTACT OUR YOUTH EDITOR MIKE GURNEY AT MIKEGURNEY55@YAHOO.CO.UK



Kawasaki Racing Team **KAWASAKI KX450F-SR**

RIDER: GAUTIER PAULIN #21

While we ran Christophe Pourcel's KX450F in Hot Wheels t'other month that bike was pretty much just a stocker compared to this full-on factory flyer. Raced in anger by Frenchman Gautier Paulin, this KX450F-SR is the highest spec MX1 missile the Kawasaki Racing Team has in its arsenal and is lavished with loads of factory unobtainium even though it looks like the fo-fiddy kwacker you or I could buy at our local Team Green dealer.

From its carbon fibre fuel tank and

subframe/airbox down to the factory tuned motor and super-special Kayaba suspension that's dialled-in exactly to Gautier's requirements for each race – there's not much on this bike that's accessible to the average Joe. However, some stuff like the Raptor Titanium footpegs, XTRIG triple clamps, Renthal Twinwall handlebars, Hinson clutch and Boyesen water pump cover actually is so if you wanted to upgrade your KX450F – not that it really needs it – they'd definitely be good places to start.





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CHAMPS CHAT!

We hook up with British MX2 champion Elliott Banks-Browne, Pro Nationals series winner Nev Bradshaw and Oakleaf Kawasaki's Alex Snow. We also take a trip to South Africa jump to visit Leatt HQ before piling inside the DBR Time Machine. What's that? Find out next month homies...



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